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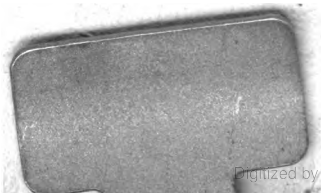
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THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
DECLINE AND FALL  
OF THE  
ROMAN EMPIRE.

By EDWARD GIBBON, Esq;

VOLUME THE TWELFTH.

A NEW EDITION.

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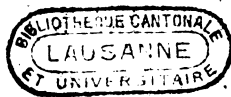
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T H E  
H I S T O R Y  
O F T H E  
D E C L I N E   A N D   F A L L  
O F T H E  
R O M A N   E M P I R E .

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C H A P. LXVIII.

*Reign and Character of Mahomet the Second. — Siege, Assault, and final Conquest, of Constantinople by the Turks. — Death of Constantine Palaeologus. — Servitude of the Greeks. — Extinction of the Roman Empire in the East. — Consternation of Europe. — Conquests and Death of Mahomet the Second.*

THE siege of Constantinople by the Turks C H A P. LXVIII.  
attracts our first attention to the person and Character of Mahomet II.  
character of the great destroyer. Mahomet the  
second<sup>1</sup> was the son of the second Amurath;  
and though his mother has been decorated with  
the titles of Christian and princess, she is more  
probably confounded with the numerous con-  
cubines who peopled from every climate the

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B

**CHAP.** haram of the sultan. His first education and sentiments were those of a devout Musulman; and as often as he conversed with an infidel, he purified his hands and face by the legal rites of ablution. Age and empire appear to have relaxed this narrow bigotry: his aspiring genius disdained to acknowledge a power above his own; and in his looser hours he presumed (it is said) to brand the prophet of Mecca as a robber and impostor. Yet the sultan persevered in a decent reverence for the doctrine and discipline of the Koran<sup>2</sup>: his private indiscretion must have been sacred from the vulgar ear; and we should suspect the credulity of strangers and sectaries, so prone to believe that a mind which is hardened against truth, must be armed with superior contempt for absurdity and error. Under the tuition of the most skilful masters, Mahomet advanced with an early and rapid progress in the paths of knowledge; and besides his native tongue, it is affirmed that he spoke or understood five languages<sup>3</sup>, the Arabic, the Persian, the Chaldæan or Hebrew, the Latin, and the Greek. The Persian might indeed contribute to his amusement, and the Arabic to his edification; and such studies are familiar to the Oriental youth. In the intercourse of the Greeks and Turks, a conqueror might wish to converse with the people over whom he was ambitious to reign: his own praises in Latin poetry<sup>4</sup> or prose<sup>5</sup> might find a passage to the royal ear; but what use or merit could recommend to the statesman or the scholar the uncouth dialect of his Hebrew slaves?

The history and geography of the world were familiar to his memory: the lives of the heroes of the East, perhaps of the West<sup>c</sup>, excited his emulation: his skill in astrology is excused by the folly of the times, and supposes some rudiments of mathematical science; and a profane taste for the arts is betrayed in his liberal invitation and reward of the painters of Italy<sup>d</sup>. But the influence of religion and learning were employed without effect on his savage and licentious nature. I will not transcribe, nor do I firmly believe, the stories of his fourteen pages, whose bellies were ripped open in search of a stolen melon; or of the beauteous slave, whose head he severed from her body, to convince the Janizaries that their master was not the votary of love. His sobriety is attested by the silence of the Turkish annals, which accuse three, and three only, of the Ottoman line of the vice of drunkenness<sup>e</sup>. But it cannot be denied that his passions were at once furious and inexorable; that in the palace, as in the field, a torrent of blood was spilt on the slightest provocation; and that the noblest of the captive youth were often dishonoured by his unnatural lust. In the Albanian war, he studied the lessons, and soon surpassed the example, of his father; and the conquest of two empires, twelve kingdoms, and two hundred cities, a vain and flattering account, is ascribed to his invincible sword. He was doubtless a soldier, and possibly a general; Constantinople has sealed his glory; but if we compare the means, the

#### 4 THE DECLINE AND FALL

**C H A P.** obstacles, and the achievements, Mahomet the  
**LXVIII.** second must blush to sustain a parallel with Alexander or Timour. Under his command, the Ottoman forces were always more numerous than their enemies; yet their progress was bounded by the Euphrates and the Adriatic; and his arms were checked by Huniades and Scanderbeg; by the Rhodian knights and by the Persian king.

His reign,

A. D. 1451,

February 9—

A. D. 1481,

July 2.

In the reign of Amurath, he twice tasted of royalty, and twice descended from the throne: his tender age was incapable of opposing his father's restoration, but never could he forgive the vizirs who had recommended that salutary measure. His nuptials were celebrated with the daughter of a Turkman emir; and, after a festival of two months, he departed from Adrianople with his bride, to reside in the government of Magnesia. Before the end of six weeks, he was recalled by a sudden message from the divan, which announced the decease of Amurath, and the mutinous spirit of the Janizaries. His speed and vigour commanded their obedience: he passed the Hellespont with a chosen guard; and at the distance of a mile from Adrianople, the vizirs and emirs, the imams, and cadhis, the soldiers and the people, fell prostrate before the new sultan. They affected to weep, they affected to rejoice; he ascended the throne at the age of twenty-one years, and removed the cause of sedition by the death, the inevitable death, of his infant brothers'. The ambassadors of Europe and Asia soon appeared to congratulate his

accession and solicit his friendship; and to all he spoke the language of moderation and peace. The confidence of the Greek emperor was revived by the solemn oaths and fair assurances, with which he sealed the ratification of the treaty: and a rich domain on the banks of the Strymon was assigned for the annual payment of three hundred thousand aspers, the pension of an Ottoman prince, who was detained at his request in the Byzantine court. Yet the neighbours of Mahomet might tremble at the severity with which a youthful monarch reformed the pomp of his father's household: the expences of luxury were applied to those of ambition, and an useless train of seven thousand falconers was either dismissed from his service or enlisted in his troops. In the first summer of his reign, he visited with an army the Asiatic provinces; but after humbling the pride, Mahomet accepted the submission, of the Caramanian, that he might not be diverted by the smallest obstacle from the execution of his great design<sup>10</sup>.

The Mahometan, and more especially the Turkish casuists, have pronounced that no promise can bind the faithful against the interest and duty of their religion; and that the sultan may abrogate his own treaties and those of his predecessors. The justice and magnanimity of Amurath had scorned this immoral privilege; but his son, though the proudest of men, could stoop from ambition to the basest arts of dissimulation and deceit. Peace was on his lips, while war was in his heart: he incessantly sighed for the possession of

C H A P.  
LXVIII.

Hostile intentions of Mahomet,  
A. D. 1452.



## 6 THE DECLINE AND FALL

**C H A P.** Constantinople; and the Greeks, by their own  
**LXVIII** indiscretion, afforded the first pretence of the fatal rupture". Instead of labouring to be forgotten, their ambassadors pursued his camp, to demand the payment, and even the increase, of their annual stipend: the divan was importuned by their complaints, and the vizir, a secret friend of the Christians, was constrained to deliver the sense of his brethren. "Ye foolish and miserable  
 "Romans," said Calit, "we know your devices,  
 "and ye are ignorant of your own danger! the  
 "scrupulous Amurath is no more; his throne is occupied by a young conqueror, whom no laws  
 "can bind and no obstacles can resist: and if you escape from his hands, give praise to the divine clemency, which yet delays the chastisement of your  
 "sins. Why do ye seek to affright us by vain and  
 "indirect menaces? Release the fugitive Orchan,  
 "crown him sultan of Romania; call the Hungarians from beyond the Danube; arm against  
 "us the nations of the West: and be assured,  
 "that you will only provoke and precipitate  
 "your ruin." But, if the fears of the ambassadors were alarmed by the stern language of the vizir, they were soothed by the courteous audience and friendly speeches of the Ottoman prince; and Mahomet assured them that on his return to Adrianople he would redress the grievances, and consult the true interest, of the Greeks. No sooner had he repassed the Hellespont than he issued a mandate to suppress their pension, and to expel their officers from the banks of the Strymon: in this measure he betrayed an hostile

mind; and the second order announced, and in some degree commenced, the siege of Constantinople. In the narrow pass of the Bosphorus, an Asiatic fortress had formerly been raised by his grandfather: in the opposite situation, on the European side, he resolved to erect a more formidable castle; and a thousand masons were commanded to assemble in the spring on a spot named Asomaton, about five miles from the Greek metropolis<sup>12</sup>. Persuasion is the resource of the feeble; and the feeble can seldom persuade: the ambassadors of the emperor attempted, without success, to divert Mahomet from the execution of his design. They represented, that his grandfather had solicited the permission of Manuel to build a castle on his own territories; but that this double fortification, which would command the strait, could only tend to violate the alliance of the nations; to intercept the Latins who traded in the Black Sea, and perhaps to annihilate the subsistence of the city. "I form no enterprize," replied the perfidious sultan, "against the city; but the empire of Constantinople is measured by her walls. Have you forgot the distress to which my father was reduced, when you formed a league with the Hungarians; when they invaded our country by land, and the Hellespont was occupied by the French galleys? Amurath was compelled to force the passage of the Bosphorus; and your strength was not equal to your malevolence. I was then a child at Adrianople; the Moslems trembled; and for

## 8 THE DECLINE AND FALL

CHAP. "a while the *Gabours*" insulted our disgrace.  
LXVIII. "But when my father had triumphed in the  
"field of Warnæ, he vowed to erect a fort on  
"the western shore, and that vow it is my duty  
"to accomplish. Have ye the right, have ye  
"the power, to control my actions on my own  
"ground? For that ground *is* my own: as far  
"as the shores of the Bosphorus, Asia is inhabited  
"by the Turks, and Europe is deserted by the  
"Romans. Return, and inform your king that  
"the present Ottoman is far different from his  
"predecessors; that *his* resolutions surpass *their*  
"wishes; and that *he* performs more than *they*  
"could resolve. Return in safety — but the next  
"who delivers a similar message may expect to  
"be flayed alive." After this declaration, Con-  
stantine, the first of the Greeks in spirit as in  
rank", had determined to unsheathe the sword,  
and to resist the approach and establishment of  
the Turks on the Bosphorus. He was disarmed  
by the advice of his civil and ecclesiastical mi-  
nisters, who recommended a system less generous,  
and even less prudent, than his own, to approve  
their patience and long-suffering, to brand the  
Ottoman with the name and guilt of an aggressor,  
and to depend on chance and time for their own  
safety and the destruction of a fort which could  
not long be maintained in the neighbourhood of  
a great and populous city. Amidst hope and fear,  
the fears of the wise and the hopes of the credu-  
lous, the winter rolled away; the proper business  
of each man, and each hour, was postponed;

and the Greeks shut their eyes against the impending danger, till the arrival of the spring and the sultan decided the assurance of their ruin. C H A P.  
LXVIII.

Of a master who never forgives, the orders are seldom disobeyed. On the twenty-sixth of March, the appointed spot of Asomaton was covered with an active swarm of Turkish artificers; and the materials by sea and land, were diligently transported from Europe and Asia<sup>15</sup>. The lime had been burnt in Cataphrygia; the timber was cut down in the woods of Heraclea and Nicomedia; and the stones were dug from the Anatolian quarries. Each of the thousand masons was assisted by two workmen; and a measure of two cubits was marked for their daily task. The fortress<sup>16</sup> was built in a triangular form; each angle was flanked by a strong and massy tower; one on the declivity of the hill, two along the sea-shore: a thickness of twenty-two feet was assigned for the walls, thirty for the towers; and the whole building was covered with a solid platform of lead. Mahomet himself pressed and directed the work with indefatigable ardour: his three vizirs claimed the honour of finishing their respective towers; the zeal of the cadhis emulated that of the Janizaries; the meanest labour was ennobled by the service of God and the sultan; and the diligence of the multitude was quickened by the eye of a despot, whose smile was the hope of fortune, and whose frown was the messenger of death. The Greek emperor beheld with terror the irresistible progress of the

He builds a  
fortress on  
the Bospho-  
rus,  
A. D. 1452.  
March,

## 10 THE DECLINE AND FALL

C H A P. work; and vainly strove, by flattery and gifts,  
 LXVIII. to assuage an implacable foe, who sought, and secretly fomented, the slightest occasion of a quarrel. Such occasions must soon and inevitably be found. The ruins of stately churches, and even the marble columns which had been consecrated to St. Michael the archangel, were employed without scruple by the profane and rapacious Moslems; and some Christians, who presumed to oppose the removal, received from their hands the crown of martyrdom. Constantine had solicited a Turkish guard to protect the fields and harvests of his subjects: the guard was fixed; but their first order was to allow free pasture to the mules and horses of the camp, and to defend their brethren if they should be molested by the natives. The retinue of an Ottoman chief had left their horses to pass the night among the ripe corn: the damage was felt; the insult was resented; and several of both nations were slain in a tumultuous conflict. Mahomet listened with joy to the complaint; and a detachment was commanded to exterminate the guilty village: the guilty had fled; but forty innocent and unsuspecting reapers were massacred by the soldiers. Till this provocation, Constantinople had been open to the visits of commerce and curiosity: on the first alarm, the gates were shut; but the emperor, still anxious for peace, released on the third day his Turkish captives; and expressed, in a last message, the firm resignation of a Christian and a soldier. "Since neither oaths, nor

The Turkish  
 War,  
 June;

"treaty, nor submission, can secure peace, pursue," said he to Mahomet, "your impious warfare. My trust is in God alone: if it should please him to mollify your heart, I shall rejoice in the happy change; if he delivers the city into your hands, I submit without a murmur to his holy will. But until the judge of the earth shall pronounce between us, it is my duty to live and die in the defence of my people." The sultan's answer was hostile and decisive: his fortifications were completed; and before his departure for Adrianople, he stationed a vigilant Aga and four hundred Janizaries, to levy a tribute of the ships of every nation that should pass within the reach of their cannon. ● H A P.  
LXVIII.

A Venetian vessel, refusing obedience to the new lords of the Bosphorus, was sunk with a single bullet. The master and thirty sailors escaped in the boat; but they were dragged in chains to the *porte*: the chief was impaled; his companions were beheaded; and the historian Ducas<sup>18</sup> beheld, at Demotica, their bodies exposed to the wild beasts. The siege of Constantinople was deferred till the ensuing spring; but an Ottoman army marched into the Morea to divert the force of the brothers of Constantine. At this æra of calamity, one of these princes, the despot Thomas, was blessed or afflicted with the birth of a son; "the last heir," says the plaintive Phranza, "of the last spark of the Roman empire."<sup>19</sup> A. D. 1435,  
January 17.



## 12 THE DECLINE AND FALL

CHAPTER.

LXVIII.

Preparations  
for the siege  
of Constantinople,

A. D. 1452,  
September—

A. D. 1453,  
April.

The Greeks and the Turks passed an anxious and sleepless winter: the former were kept awake by their fears, the latter by their hopes; both by the preparations of defence and attack; and the two emperors, who had the most to lose or to gain, were the most deeply affected by the national sentiment. In Mahomet, that sentiment was inflamed by the ardour of his youth and temper: he amused his leisure with building at Adrianople "the lofty palace of Jehan Numa (the watch-tower of the world); but his serious thoughts were irrevocably bent on the conquest of the city of Cæsar. At the dead of night, about the second watch, he started from his bed, and commanded the instant attendance of his prime vizir. The message, the hour, the prince, and his own situation, alarmed the guilty conscience of Calil Basba; who had possessed the confidence, and advised the restoration, of Amurath. On the accession of the son, the vizir was confirmed in his office and the appearances of favour; but the veteran statesman was not insensible that he trod on a thin and slippery ice, which might break under his footsteps, and plunge him in the abyss. His friendship for the Christians, which might be innocent under the late reign, had stigmatised him with the name of Gabour Ortachi, or foster-brother of the infidels<sup>22</sup>; and his avarice entertained a venal and treasonable correspondence, which was detected and punished after the conclusion of the war. On receiving the royal mandate, he embraced, perhaps for the

last time, his wife and children; filled a cup with pieces of gold, hastened to the palace, adored the sultan, and offered, according to the Oriental custom, the slight tribute of his duty and gratitude". "It is not my wish," said Mahomet, "to resume my gifts, but rather to heap and multiply them on thy head. In my turn I ask a present far more valuable and important;—Constantinople." As soon as the vizir had recovered from his surprise, "the same God," said he, "who has already given thee so large a portion of the Roman empire, will not deny the remnant, and the capital. His providence, and thy power, assure thy success; and myself, with the rest of thy faithful slaves, will sacrifice our lives and fortunes." "Lala", (or preceptor), continued the sultan, "do you see this pillow? all the night, in my agitation, I have pulled it on one side and the other; I have risen from my bed, again have I lain down; yet sleep has not visited these weary eyes. Beware of the gold and silver of the Romans: in arms we are superior; and with the aid of God, and the prayers of the prophet, we shall speedily become masters of Constantinople." To sound the disposition of his soldiers, he often wandered through the streets alone and in disguise: and it was fatal to discover the sultan, when he wished to escape from the vulgar eye. His hours were spent in delineating the plan of the hostile city: in debating with his generals and engineers, on what spot he should

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C H A P. erect his batteries; on which side he should assault  
 LXVII. the walls; where he should spring his mines; to  
 what place he should apply his scaling-ladders;  
 and the exercises of the day repeated and proved  
 the lucubrations of the night.

The great  
 cannon of  
 Mahomet.

Among the implements of destruction, he studied with peculiar care the recent tremendous discovery of the Latins; and his artillery surpassed whatever had yet appeared in the world. A founder of cannon, a Dane or Hungarian, who had been almost starved in the Greek service, deserted to the Moslems, and was liberally entertained by the Turkish sultan. Mahomet was satisfied with the answer to his first question, which he eagerly pressed on the artist. "Am I able to  
 "cast a cannon capable of throwing a ball or  
 "stone of sufficient size to batter the walls of  
 "Constantinople? I am not ignorant of their  
 "strength, but were they more solid than those  
 "of Babylon, I could oppose an engine of  
 "superior power: the position and management  
 "of that engine must be left to your engineers." On this assurance, a foundery was established at Adrianople: the metal was prepared; and at the end of three months, Urban produced a piece of brass ordnance of stupendous, and almost incredible, magnitude; a measure of twelve palms is assigned to the bore; and the stone bullet weighed above six hundred pounds". A vacant place before the new palace was chosen for the first experiment; but, to prevent the sudden and mischievous effects of astonishment and fear, a

proclamation was issued, that the capnon would be discharged the ensuing day. The explosion was felt or heard in a circuit of an hundred furlongs: the ball, by the force of gunpowder, was driven above a mile; and on the spot where it fell, it buried itself a fathom deep in the ground. For the conveyance of this destructive engine, a frame or carriage of thirty waggon was linked together and drawn along by a team of sixty oxen: two hundred men on both sides were stationed to poise and support the rolling weight; two hundred and fifty workmen marched before to smooth the way and repair the bridges; and near two months were employed in a laborious journey of one hundred and fifty miles. A lively philosopher<sup>33</sup> derides on this occasion the credulity of the Greeks, and observes, with much reason, that we should always distrust the exaggerations of a vanquished people. He calculates, that a ball, even of two hundred pounds, would require a charge of one hundred and fifty pounds of powder; and that the stroke would be feeble and impotent, since not a fifteenth part of the mass could be inflamed at the same moment. A stranger as I am to the art of destruction, I can discern that the modern improvements of artillery prefer the number of pieces to the weight of metal; the quickness of the fire to the sound, or even the consequence, of a single explosion. Yet I dare not reject the positive and unanimous evidence of contemporary writers; nor can it seem improbable, that the first artists, in their rude

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**C H A P.** and ambitious efforts, should have transgressed  
**LXVIII.** the standard of moderation. A Turkish cannon, more enormous than that of Mahomet, still guards the entrance of the Dardanelles; and if the use be inconvenient, it has been found on a late trial that the effect was far from contemptible. A stone bullet of *eleven* hundred pounds weight was once discharged with three hundred and thirty pounds of powder; at the distance of six hundred yards it shivered into three rocky fragments, traversed the streight, and, leaving the waters in a foam, again rose and bounded against the opposite hill<sup>26</sup>.

**Mahomet II.**  
**forms the**  
**siege of Con-**  
**stantinople,**  
**A. D. 1453,**  
**April 6**

While Mahomet threatened the capital of the East, the Greek emperor implored with fervent prayers the assistance of earth and heaven. But the invisible powers were deaf to his supplications; and Christendom beheld with indifference the fall of Constantinople, while she derived at least some promise of supply from the jealous and temporal policy of the sultan of Egypt. Some states were too weak, and others too remote; by some the danger was considered as imaginary, by others as inevitable: the Western princes were involved in their endless and domestic quarrels; and the Roman pontiff was exasperated by the falsehood or obstinacy of the Greeks. Instead of employing in their favour the arms and treasures of Italy, Nicholas the fifth had foretold their approaching ruin; and his honour was engaged in the accomplishment of his prophecy. Perhaps he

was

was softened by the last extremity of their distress; but his compassion was tardy; his efforts were faint and unavailing; and Constantinople had fallen; before the squadrons of Genoa and Venice could sail from their harbours". Even the princes of the Morea and of the Greek islands affected a cold neutrality: the Genoese colony of Galata negotiated a private treaty; and the sultan indulged them in the delusive hope, that by his clemency they might survive the ruin of the empire. A plebeian crowd, and some Byzantine nobles, basely withdrew from the danger of their country; and the avarice of the rich denied the emperor, and reserved for the Turks, the secret treasures which might have raised in their defence whole armies of mercenaries". The indigent and solitary prince prepared however to sustain his formidable adversary; but if his courage were equal to the peril, his strength was inadequate to the contest. In the beginning of the spring, the Turkish vanguard swept the towns and villages as far as the gates of Constantinople: submission was spared and protected; whatever presumed to resist was exterminated with fire and sword. The Greek places on the Black Sea, Mesembria, Acheloum, and Bizon, surrendered on the first summons; Selybria alone deserved the honours of a siege or blockade; and the bold inhabitants, while they were invested by land, launched their boats, pillaged the opposite coast of Cyzicus, and sold their captives in the public

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C H A P. market. But on the approach of Mahomet himself all was silent and prostrate: he first halted at the distance of five miles: and from thence advancing in battle array, planted before the gate of St. Romanus the Imperial standard; and, on the sixth day of April, formed the memorable siege of Constantinople.

Forces of the  
Turks.

The troops of Asia and Europe extended on the right and left from the Propontis to the harbour: the Janizaries in the front were stationed before the sultan's tent; the Ottoman line was covered by a deep intrenchment, and a subordinate army inclosed the suburb of Galata, and watched the doubtful faith of the Genoese. The inquisitive Philéppus, who resided in Greece about thirty years before the siege, is confident, that all the Turkish forces, of any name or value, could not exceed the number of sixty thousand horse and twenty thousand foot; and he upbraids the pusillanimity of the nations, who had tamely yielded to an handful of Barbarians. Such indeed might be the regular establishment of the *Capiculi*<sup>29</sup>, the troops of the Porte, who marched with the prince, and were paid from his royal treasury. But the bashaws, in their respective governments, maintained or levied a provincial militia; many lands were held by a military tenure; many volunteers were attracted by the hope of spoil; and the sound of the holy trumpet invited a swarm of hungry and fearless fanatics, who might contribute at least to multiply the terrors, and in a first attack to blunt the swords,

of the Christians. The whole mass of the Turkish powers is magnified by Ducas, Calcocondyles, and Leonard of Chios, to the amount of three or four hundred thousand men; but Phranza was a less remote and more accurate judge; and his precise definition of two hundred and fifty-eight thousand does not exceed the measure of experience and probability \*. The navy of the besiegers was less formidable: the Propontis was overspread with three hundred and twenty sail; but of these no more than eighteen could be rated as gallies of war; and the far greater part must be degraded to the condition of store-ships and transports, which poured into the camp fresh supplies of men, ammunition, and provisions. In her last decay, Constantinople was still peopled with more than an hundred thousand inhabitants; but these numbers, are found in the accounts, not of war, but of captivity; and they mostly consisted of mechanics, of priests, of women, and of men devoid of that spirit which even women have sometimes exerted for the common safety. I can suppose, I could almost excuse, the reluctance of subjects to serve on a distant frontier, at the will of a tyrant; but the man who dares not expose his life in the defence of his children and his property has lost in society the first and most active energies of nature. By the emperor's command, a particular enquiry had been made through the streets and houses, how many of the citizens, or even of the monks, were able and willing to bear arms for their country. The

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Greeks.

**C H A P.** lists were entrusted to Phranza<sup>11</sup>; and, after a  
**LXVIII.** diligent addition, he informed his master, with grief and surprise, that the national defence was reduced to four thousand nine hundred and seventy *Romans*. Between Constantine and his faithful minister, this comfortless secret was preserved; and a sufficient proportion of shields, crossbows, and muskets, was distributed from the arsenal to the city bands. They derived some accession from a body of two thousand strangers, under the command of John Justiniani, a noble Genoese; a liberal donative was advanced to these auxiliaries; and a princely recompence, the isle of Lemnos, was promised to the valour and victory of their chief. A strong chain was drawn across the mouth of the harbour: it was supported by some Greek and Italian vessels of war and merchandise; and the ships of every Christian nation, that successively arrived from Candia and the Black Sea, were detained for the public service. Against the powers of the Ottoman empire, a city of the extent of thirteen, perhaps of sixteen, miles was defended by a scanty garrison of seven or eight thousand soldiers. Europe and Asia were open to the besiegers; but the strength and provisions of the Greeks must sustain a daily decrease; nor could they indulge the expectation of any foreign succour or supply.

Falſe union  
 of the two  
 churches.  
 A. D. 1452,  
 Dec. 12.

The primitive Romans would have drawn their swords in the resolution of death or conquest. The primitive Christians might have embraced

each other, and awaited in patience and charity the stroke of martyrdom. But the Greeks of Constantinople were animated only by the spirit of religion, and that spirit was productive only of animosity and discord. Before his death, the emperor John Palæologus had renounced the unpopular measure of an union with the Latins; nor was the idea revived, till the distress of his brother Constantine imposed a last trial of flattery and dissimulation<sup>11</sup>. With the demand of temporal aid, his ambassadors were instructed to mingle the assurance of spiritual obedience: his neglect of the church was excused by the urgent cares of the state; and his orthodox wishes solicited the presence of a Roman legate. The Vatican had been too often deluded; yet the signs of repentance could not decently be overlooked; a legate was more easily granted than an army; and about six months before the final destruction, the cardinal Isidore of Russia appeared in that character with a retinue of priests and soldiers. The emperor saluted him as a friend and father; respectfully listened to his public and private sermons; and with the most obsequious of the clergy and laymen subscribed the act of union, as it had been ratified in the council of Florence. On the twelfth of December, the two nations, in the church of St. Sophia, joined in the communion of sacrifice and prayer; and the names of the two pontiffs were solemnly commemorated; the names of Nicholas the fifth, the vicar of Christ, and of the patriarch Gregory who had been driven into exile by a rebellious people.

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Obstinacy  
and fanaticism  
of the  
Greeks.

But the dress and language of the Latin priest who officiated at the altar, were an object of scandal; and it was observed with horror, that he consecrated a cake or wafer of *unleavened* bread, and poured cold water into the cup of the sacrament. A national historian acknowledges with a blush, that none of his countrymen, not the emperor himself, were sincere in this occasional conformity ". Their hasty and unconditional submission was palliated by a promise of future revival; but the best, or the worst, of their excuses was the confession of their own perjury. When they were pressed by the reproaches of their honest brethren, "Have patience," they whispered, "have patience till God shall have delivered the city from the great dragon who seeks to devour us. You shall then perceive whether we are truly reconciled with the Azymites." But patience is not the attribute of zeal; nor can the arts of a court be adapted to the freedom and violence of popular enthusiasm. From the dome of St. Sophia, the inhabitants of either sex, and of every degree, rushed in crowds to the cell of the monk Gennadius ", to consult the oracle of the church. The holy man was invisible; entranced, as it should seem, in deep meditation, or divine rapture: but he had exposed on the door of his cell, a speaking tablet; and they successively withdrew after reading these tremendous words: "O miserable Romans, why will ye abandon the truth; and why, instead of confiding in God, will ye put your

"trust in the Italians? In losing your faith, you  
 "will lose your city. Have mercy on me, O  
 "Lord! I protest in thy presence, that I am  
 "innocent of the crime. O miserable Romans,  
 "consider, pause, and repent. At the same  
 "moment that you renounce the religion of  
 "your fathers, by embracing impiety, you  
 "submit to a foreign servitude." According to  
 the advice of Gennadius, the religious virgins,  
 as pure as angels and as proud as dæmons,  
 rejected the act of union, and abjured all com-  
 munion with the present and future associates of  
 the Latins; and their example was applauded  
 and imitated by the greatest part of the clergy  
 and people. From the monastery, the devout  
 Greeks dispersed themselves in the taverns; drank  
 confusion to the slaves of the pope; emptied their  
 glasses in honour of the image of the holy Virgin;  
 and besought her to defend against Mahomet,  
 the city which she had formerly saved from  
 Chosroes and the Chagan. In the double intoxi-  
 cation of zeal and wine, they valiantly exclaimed,  
 "What occasion have we for succour, or union,  
 "or Latins? far from us be the worship of the  
 "Azymites!" During the winter that preceded  
 the Turkish conquest, the nation was distracted  
 by this epidemical frenzy; and the season of  
 Lent, the approach of Easter, instead of breathing  
 charity and love, served only to fortify the  
 obstinacy and influence of the zealots. The  
 confessors scrutinized and alarmed the conscience  
 of their votaries, and a rigorous penance was

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**C H A P. LXVIII.** imposed on those, who had received the communion from a priest, who had given an express or tacit consent to the union. His service at the altar propagated the infection to the mute and simple spectators of the ceremony: they forfeited, by the impure spectacle, the virtue of the sacerdotal character; nor was it lawful, even in danger of sudden death, to invoke the assistance of their prayers or absolution. No sooner had the church of St. Sophia been polluted by the Latin sacrifice, than it was deserted as a Jewish synagogue, or an heathen temple, by the clergy and people: and a vast and gloomy silence prevailed in that venerable dome, which had so often smoked with a cloud of incense, blazed with innumerable lights, and resounded with the voice of prayer and thanksgiving. The Latins were the most odious of heretics and infidels; and the first minister of the empire, the great duke, was heard to declare, that he had rather behold in Constantinople the turban of Mahomet, than the pope's tiara or a cardinal's hat<sup>11</sup>. A sentiment so unworthy of Christians and patriots, was familiar and fatal to the Greeks: the emperor was deprived of the affection and support of his subjects; and their native cowardice was sanctified by resignation to the divine decree, or the visionary hope of a miraculous deliverance.

Siege of  
Constantinople  
by Mahomet II.

Of the triangle which composes the figure of Constantinople, the two sides along the sea were made inaccessible to an enemy; the Propontis by nature, and the harbour by art. Between the

two waters, the basis of the triangle, the land side was protected by a double wall, and a deep ditch of the depth of one hundred feet. Against this line of fortification, which Phranza, an eye-witness, prolongs to the measure of six miles<sup>36</sup>, the Ottomans directed their principal attack; and the emperor, after distributing the service and command of the most perilous stations, undertook the defence of the external wall. In the first days of the siege, the Greek soldiers descended into the ditch, or sallied into the field; but they soon discovered, that, in the proportion of their numbers, one Christian was of more value than twenty Turks: and, after these bold preludes, they were prudently content to maintain the rampart with their missile weapons. Nor should this prudence be accused of pusillanimity. The nation was indeed pusillanimous and base; but the last Constantine deserves the name of an hero: his noble band of volunteers was inspired with Roman virtue; and the foreign auxiliaries supported the honour of the Western chivalry. The incessant volleys of lances and arrows were accompanied with the smoke, the sound, and the fire, of their musketry and cannon. Their small arms discharged at the same time either five, or even ten, balls of lead, of the size of a walnut; and, according to the closeness of the ranks and the force of the powder, several breast-plates and bodies were transpierced by the same shot. But the Turkish approaches were soon sunk in trenches, or covered with ruins.

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April 6—

May 29.



C H A P. Each day added to the science of the Christians;  
 LXVIII. but their inadequate stock of gunpowder was wasted in the operations of each day. Their ordnance was not powerful, either in size or number; and if they possessed some heavy cannon, they feared to plant them on the walls, lest the aged structure should be shaken and overthrown by the explosion ". The same destructive secret had been revealed to the Moslems; by whom it was employed with the superior energy of zeal, riches, and despotism. The great cannon of Mahomet has been separately noticed; an important and visible object in the history of the times: but that enormous engine was flanked by two fellows almost of equal magnitude "; the long order of the Turkish artillery was pointed against the walls; fourteen batteries thundered at once on the most accessible places; and of one of these it is ambiguously expressed, that it was mounted with one hundred and thirty guns, or that it discharged one hundred and thirty bullets. Yet, in the power and activity of the fultan, we may discern the infancy of the new science. Under a master who counted the moments, the great cannon could be loaded and fired no more than seven times in one day ". The heated metal unfortunately burst; several workmen were destroyed; and the skill of an artist was admired who bethought himself of preventing the danger and the accident, by pouring oil, after each explosion, into the mouth of the cannon.

The first random shots were productive of **C H A P.** more sound than effect; and it was by the advice **LXVIII.** of a Christian, that the engineers were taught to level their aim against the two opposite sides of the salient angles of a bastion. However imperfect, the weight and repetition of the fire made some impression on the walls; and the Turks, pushing their approaches to the edge of the ditch, attempted to fill the enormous chasm, and to build a road to the assault". Innumerable fascines, and hogsheds, and trunks of trees, were heaped on each other; and such was the impetuosity of the throng, that the foremost and the weakest were pushed headlong down the precipice, and instantly buried under the accumulated mafs. To fill the ditch, was the toil of the besiegers; to clear away the rubbish, was the safety of the besieged; and, after a long and bloody conflict, the web that had been woven in the day was still unravelled in the night. The next resource of Mahomet was the practice of mines; but the soil was rocky; in every attempt he was stopped and undermined by the Christian engineers; nor had the art been yet invented of replenishing those subterraneous passages with gunpowder, and blowing whole towers and cities into the air". A circumstance that distinguishes the siege of Constantinople, is the re-union of the ancient and modern artillery. The cannon were intermingled with the mechanical engines for casting stones and darts; the bullet and the battering-ram were directed against the same walls; nor had the

Attack and  
defence.

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C H A P. discovery of gunpowder superseded the use of the  
LXVIII. liquid and unextinguishable fire. A wooden turret of the largest size was advanced on rollers: this portable magazine of ammunition and fascines was protected by a threefold covering of bulls' hides; incessant volleys were securely discharged from the loop-holes; in the front, three doors were contrived for the alternate sally and retreat of the soldiers and workmen. They ascended by a stair-case to the upper platform; and, as high as the level of that platform, a scaling-ladder could be raised by pulleys to form a bridge, and grapple with the adverse rampart. By these various arts of annoyance, some as new as they were pernicious to the Greeks, the tower of St. Romanus was at length overturned: after a severe struggle, the Turks were repulsed from the breach and interrupted by darkness; but they trusted, that with the return of light they should renew the attack with fresh vigour and decisive success. Of this pause of action, this interval of hope, each moment was improved by the activity of the emperor and Justiniani, who passed the night on the spot, and urged the labours which involved the safety of the church and city. At the dawn of day, the impatient sultan perceived, with astonishment and grief, that his wooden turret had been reduced to ashes: the ditch was cleared and restored; and the tower of St. Romanus was again strong and entire. He deplored the failure of his design; and uttered a profane exclamation, that the word of the thirty-

seven thousand prophets should not have com-  
pelled him to believe that such a work, in so  
short a time, could have been accomplished by  
the infidels.

The generosity of the Christian princes was  
cold and tardy; but in the first apprehension of  
a siege, Constantine had negotiated, in the isles  
of the Archipelago, the Morea, and Sicily, the  
most indispensable supplies. As early as the be-  
ginning of April, five "great ships, equipped  
for merchandise and war, would have sailed from  
the harbour of Chios, had not the wind blown  
obstinately from the north". One of these ships  
bore the Imperial flag; the remaining four be-  
longed to the Genoese; and they were laden with  
wheat and barley, with wine, oil, and vegetables,  
and, above all, with soldiers and mariners, for  
the service of the capital. After a tedious delay,  
a gentle breeze, and, on the second day, a strong  
gale from the south, carried them through the  
Hellespont and the Propontis: but the city was  
already invested by sea and land; and the Turkish  
fleet, at the entrance of the Bosphorus, was  
stretched from shore to shore, in the form of a  
crescent, to intercept, or at least to repel, these  
bold auxiliaries. The reader who has present to  
his mind the geographical picture of Constantin-  
ople, will conceive and admire the greatness of  
the spectacle. The five Christian ships continued  
to advance with joyful shouts, and a full press,  
both of sails and oars, against an hostile fleet of  
three hundred vessels; and the rampart, the camp,

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Succour and  
victory of  
four ships.

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C H A P. the coasts of Europe and Asia, were lined with  
LXVIII. innumerable spectators, who anxiously awaited the event of this momentous succour. At the first view that event could not appear doubtful; the superiority of the Moslems was beyond all measure or account; and, in a calm, their numbers and valour must inevitably have prevailed. But their hasty and imperfect navy had been created, not by the genius of the people, but by the will of the sultan: in the height of their prosperity, the Turks have acknowledged, that if God had given them the earth, he had left the sea to the infidels<sup>4</sup>; and a series of defeats, a rapid progress of decay, has established the truth of their modest confession. Except eighteen gallees of some force, the rest of their fleet consisted of open boats, rudely constructed and awkwardly managed, crowded with troops, and destitute of cannon; and, since courage arises in a great measure from the consciousness of strength, the bravest of the Janizaries might tremble on a new element. In the Christian Squadron, five stout and lofty ships were guided by skilful pilots, and manned with the veterans of Italy and Greece, long practised in the arts and perils of the sea. Their weight was directed to sink or scatter the weak obstacles that impeded their passage: their artillery swept the waters: their liquid fire was poured on the heads of the adversaries, who, with the design of boarding, presumed to approach them: and the winds and waves are always on the side of the ablest navigators. In this conflict, the

Imperial vessel, which had been almost overpowered, was rescued by the Genoese; but the Turks, in a distant and a closer attack, were twice repulsed with considerable loss. Mahomet himself sat on horseback on the beach, to encourage their valour by his voice and presence, by the promise of reward, and by fear, more potent than the fear of the enemy. The passions of his soul, and even the gestures of his body, seemed to imitate the actions of the combatants; and, as if he had been the lord of nature, he spurred his horse with a fearless and impotent effort into the sea. His loud reproaches, and the clamours of the camp, urged the Ottomans to a third attack, more fatal and bloody than the two former; and I must repeat, though I cannot credit, the evidence of Phranza, who affirms, from their own mouth, that they lost above twelve thousand men in the slaughter of the day. They fled in disorder to the shores of Europe and Asia, while the Christian squadron, triumphant and unhurt, steered along the Bosphorus, and securely anchored within the chain of the harbour. In the confidence of victory, they boasted that the whole Turkish power must have yielded to their arms; but the admiral, or captain bashaw, found some consolation for a painful wound in his eye, by representing that accident as the cause of his defeat. Baltha Ogli was a renegade of the race of the Bulgarian princes: his military character was tainted with the unpopular vice of avarice; and under the despotism of the prince or people,

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**C H A P.** misfortune is a sufficient evidence of guilt. His rank  
**LXVIII.** and services were annihilated by the displeasure of Mahomet. In the royal presence, the captain bashaw was extended on the ground by four slaves, and received one hundred strokes with a golden rod<sup>11</sup>: his death had been pronounced; and he adored the clemency of the sultan, who was satisfied with the milder punishment of confiscation and exile. The introduction of this supply revived the hopes of the Greeks, and accused the supineness of their western allies. Amidst the deserts of Anatolia and the rocks of Palestine, the millions of the crusades had buried themselves in a voluntary and inevitable grave; but the situation of the Imperial city was strong against her enemies, and accessible to her friends; and a rational and moderate armament of the maritime states might have saved the relics of the Roman name, and maintained a Christian fortress in the heart of the Ottoman empire. Yet this was the sole and feeble attempt for the deliverance of Constantinople: the more distant powers were insensible of its danger; and the ambassador of Hungary, or at least of Huniades, resided in the Turkish camp, to remove the fears, and to direct the operations, of the sultan<sup>12</sup>.

Mahomet transports his navy over land.

It was difficult for the Greeks to penetrate the secret of the divan; yet the Greeks are persuaded, that a resistance, so obstinate and surprising, had fatigued the perseverance of Mahomet. He began to meditate a retreat, and the siege would have been speedily raised if the ambition and jealousy of  
of

of the second vizir had not opposed the perfidious advice of Calil Bashaw, who still maintained a secret correspondence with the Byzantine court. The reduction of the city appeared to be hopeless, unless a double attack could be made from the harbour as well as from the land; but the harbour was inaccessible: an impenetrable chain was now defended by eight large ships, more than twenty of a smaller size, with several gallies and sloops; and, instead of forcing this barrier, the Turks might apprehend a naval sally, and a second encounter in the open sea. In this perplexity, the genius of Mahomet conceived and executed a plan of a bold and marvellous cast, of transporting by land his lighter vessels and military stores from the Bosphorus into the higher part of the harbour. The distance is about ten miles; the ground is uneven, and was overspread with thickets; and, as the road must be opened behind the suburb of Galata, their free passage or total destruction must depend on the option of the Genoese. But these selfish merchants were ambitious of the favour of being the last devoured; and the deficiency of art was supplied by the strength of obedient myriads. A level way was covered with a broad platform of strong and solid planks; and to render them more slippery and smooth, they were anointed with the fat of sheep and oxen. Four score light gallies and brigantines of fifty and thirty oars, were dis-embarked on the Bosphorus shore; arranged successively on rollers; and drawn forwards by the power of men and

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C H A P. pullies. Two guides or pilots were stationed at  
 LXVIII the helm, and the prow, of each vessel; the sails  
 were unfurled to the winds; and the labour was  
 cheered by song and acclamation. In the course  
 of a single night, this Turkish fleet painfully  
 climbed the hill, steered over the plain, and  
 was launched from the declivity into the shallow  
 waters of the harbour, far above the molestation  
 of the deeper vessels of the Greeks. The real  
 importance of this operation was magnified by  
 the consternation and confidence which it inspir-  
 ed: but the notorious, unquestionable, fact was  
 displayed before the eyes, and is recorded by the  
 pens, of the two nations ". A similar stratagem  
 had been repeatedly practised by the ancients ";  
 the Ottoman gallies (I must again repeat) should  
 be considered as large boats; and, if we compare  
 the magnitude and the distance, the obstacles  
 and the means, the boasted miracle " has per-  
 haps been equalled by the industry of our own  
 times ". As soon as Mahomet had occupied the  
 upper harbour with a fleet and army; he con-  
 structed, in the narrowest part, a bridge, or  
 rather mole, of fifty cubits in breadth and one  
 hundred in length: it was formed of casks and  
 hogheads; joined with rafters, linked with iron,  
 and covered with a solid floor. On this floating  
 battery, he planted one of his largest cannon,  
 while the fourscore gallies, with troops and  
 scaling-ladders, approached the most accessible  
 side, which had formerly been stormed by the  
 Latin conquerors. The indolence of the Christians

has been accused for not destroying these unfinished works ; but their fire, by a superior fire was controlled and silenced ; nor were they wanting in a nocturnal attempt to burn the vessels as well as the bridge of the sultan. His vigilance prevented their approach ; their foremost galliots were sunk or taken ; forty youths, the bravest of Italy and Greece, were inhumanly massacred at his command ; nor could the emperor's grief be assuaged by the just though cruel retaliation, of exposing from the walls the heads of two hundred and sixty Musulman captives. After a siege of forty days, the fate of Constantinople could no longer be averted. The diminutive garrison was exhausted by a double attack : the fortifications, which had stood for ages against hostile violence, were dismantled on all sides by the Ottoman cannon : many breaches were opened ; and near the gate of St. Romanus, four towers had been levelled with the ground. For the payment of his feeble and mutinous troops, Constantine was compelled to despoil the churches with the promise of a fourfold restitution ; and his sacrilege offered a new reproach to the enemies of the union. A spirit of discord impaired the remnant of the Christian strength : the Genoese and Venetian auxiliaries asserted the pre-eminence of their respective service ; and Justiniani and the great duke, whose ambition was not extinguished by the common danger, accused each other of treachery and cowardice.

C H A P.  
LXVIII.

Distress of  
the city.

D 2

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C H A P.

LXVIII.

Preparations  
of the Turks  
for the gene-  
ral assault,  
May 26.

During the siege of Constantinople, the words of peace and capitulation had been sometimes pronounced; and several embassies had passed between the camp and the city<sup>11</sup>. The Greek emperor was humbled by adversity; and would have yielded to any terms compatible with religion and royalty. The Turkish sultan was desirous of sparing the blood of his soldiers; still more desirous of securing for his own use the Byzantine treasures; and he accomplished a sacred duty in presenting to the *Gabours*, the choice of circumcision, of tribute, or of death. The avarice of Mahomet might have been satisfied with an annual sum of one hundred thousand ducats: but his ambition grasped the capital of the East: to the prince he offered a rich equivalent, to the people a free toleration, or a safe departure: but after some fruitless treaty, he declared his resolution of finding either a throne, or a grave, under the walls of Constantinople. A sense of honour, and the fear of universal reproach, forbade Palæologus to resign the city into the hands of the Ottomans; and he determined to abide the last extremities of war. Several days were employed by the sultan in the preparations of the assault; and a respite was granted by his favourite science of astrology, which had fixed on the twenty-ninth of May, as the fortunate and fatal hour. On the evening of the twenty-seventh, he issued his final orders; assembled in his presence the military chiefs; and dispersed his heralds through the camp to proclaim the duty, and the motives,

of the perilous enterprize. Fear is the first principle of a despotic government; and his menaces were expressed in the Oriental style, that the fugitives and deserters, had they the wings of a bird", should not escape from his inexorable justice. The greatest part of his bashaws and Janizaries were the offspring of Christian parents; but the glories of the Turkish name were perpetuated by successive adoption; and in the gradual change of individuals, the spirit of a legion, a regiment, or an *oda*, is kept alive by imitation and discipline. In this holy warfare, the Moslems were exhorted to purify their minds with prayer, their bodies with seven ablutions; and to abstain from food till the close of the ensuing day. A crowd of dervishes visited the tents to inflame the desire of martyrdom, and the assurance of spending an immortal youth amidst the rivers and gardens of paradise, and in the embraces of the black-eyed virgins. Yet Mahomet principally trusted to the efficacy of temporal and visible rewards. A double pay was promised to the victorious troops; "The city and the buildings," said Mahomet, "are mine: but I resign to your valour the captives and the spoil, the treasures of gold and beauty: be rich and be happy. Many are the provinces of my empire: the intrepid soldier who first ascends the walls of Constantinople, shall be rewarded with the government of the fairest and most wealthy; and my gratitude shall accumulate his honours and fortunes above the measure of his own hopes." Such various and

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**C H A P. LXVIII.** potent motives diffused among the Turks a general ardour, regardless of life and impatient for action: the camp reechoed with the Moslem shouts of, "God is God, there is but one God, " and Mahomet is the apostle of God "; and the sea and land, from Galata to the seven towers, were illuminated by the blaze of their nocturnal fires.

Left farewell  
of the emperor  
and the  
Greeks.

Far different was the state of the Christians; who, with loud and impotent complaints, deplored the guilt, or the punishment, of their sins. The celestial image of the Virgin had been exposed in solemn procession; but their divine patroness was deaf to their entreaties; they accused the obstinacy of the emperor for refusing a timely surrender; anticipated the horrors of their fate; and sighed for the repose and security of Turkish servitude. The noblest of the Greeks, and the bravest of the allies, were summoned to the palace, to prepare them, on the evening of the twenty-eighth, for the duties and dangers of the general assault. The last speech of Palæologus was the funeral oration of the Roman empire"; he promised, he conjured, and he vainly attempted to infuse the hope which was extinguished in his own mind. In this world all was comfortless and gloomy; and neither the gospel nor the church have proposed any conspicuous recompence to the heroes who fall in the service of their country. But the example of their prince, and the confinement of a siege, had armed these warriors with the courage of despair; and the

pathetic scene is described by the feelings of the historian Phranza, who was himself present at this mournful assembly. They wept, they embraced; regardless of their families and fortunes, they devoted their lives; and each commander, departing to his station, maintained all night a vigilant and anxious watch on the rampart. The emperor, and some faithful companions, entered the dome of St. Sophia, which in a few hours was to be converted into a mosque; and devoutly received, with tears and prayers, the sacrament of the holy communion. He reposed some moments in the palace, which resounded with cries and lamentations; solicited the pardon of all whom he might have injured; and mounted on horseback to visit the guards, and explore the motions of the enemy. The distress and fall of the last Constantine are more glorious than the long prosperity of the Byzantine Cæsars.

In the confusion of darkness an assailant may sometimes succeed; but in this great and general attack, the military judgment and astrological knowledge of Mahomet advised him to expect the morning, the memorable twenty-ninth of May, in the fourteen hundred and fifty-third year of the Christian æra. The preceding night had been strenuously employed: the troops, the cannon, and the fascines, were advanced to the edge of the ditch, which in many parts presented a smooth and level passage to the breach; and his fourscore galleys almost touched with the prows and their scaling-ladders, the less defensible

CHAP.  
LXVIII.

The general  
assault,  
May 29.

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CHAP.  
LXVIII.

walls of the harbour. Under pain of death, silence was enjoined: but the physical laws of motion and sound are not obedient to discipline or fear; each individual might suppress his voice and measure his footsteps; but the march and labour of thousands must inevitably produce a strange confusion of dissonant clamours, which reached the ears of the watchmen of the towers. At day-break, without the customary signal of the morning gun, the Turks assaulted the city by sea and land; and the similitude of a twined or twisted thread has been applied to the closeness and continuity of their line of attack". The foremost ranks consisted, of the refuse of the host, a voluntary crowd who fought without order or command; of the feebleness of age or childhood, of peasants and vagrants, and of all who had joined the camp in the blind hope of plunder and martyrdom. The common impulse drove them onwards to the wall: the most audacious to climb were instantly precipitated; and not a dart, not a bullet, of the Christians, was idly wasted on the accumulated throng. But their strength and ammunition were exhausted in this laborious defence: the ditch was filled with the bodies of the slain; they supported the footsteps of their companions; and of this devoted vanguard, the death was more serviceable than the life. Under their respective bashaws and sanjaks, the troops of Anatolia and Rumania were successively led to the charge; their progress was various and doubtful; but, after a conflict of two hours, the

Greeks still maintained, and improved, their advantage; and the voice of the emperor was heard, encouraging his soldiers to achieve, by a last effort, the deliverance of their country. In that fatal moment, the Janizaries arose, fresh, vigorous and invincible. The sultan himself on horseback, with an iron mace in his hand, was the spectator and judge of their valour: he was surrounded by ten thousand of his domestic troops, whom he reserved for the decisive occasions, and the tide of battle was directed and impelled by his voice and eye. His numerous ministers of justice were posted behind the line, to urge, to restrain, and to punish; and if danger was in the front, shame and inevitable death were in the rear, of the fugitives. The cries of fear and of pain were drowned in the martial music of drums, trumpets, and attaballs; and experience has proved, that the mechanical operation of sounds, by quickening the circulation of the blood and spirits, will act on the human machine more forcibly than the eloquence of reason and honour. From the lines, the gallies, and the bridge, the Ottoman artillery thundered on all sides; and the camp and city, the Greeks and the Turks, were involved in a cloud of smoke, which could only be dispelled by the final deliverance or destruction of the Roman empire. The single combats of the heroes of history or fable, amuse our fancy and engage our affections: the skilful evolutions of war may inform the mind, and improve a necessary, though pernicious, science. But in the uniform and odious



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CHAPTER. pictures of a general assault, all is blood, and  
LXVIII. horror, and confusion; nor shall I strive, at the  
distance of three centuries and a thousand miles,  
to delineate a scene, of which there could be no  
spectators, and of which the actors themselves  
were incapable of forming any just or adequate  
idea.

The immediate loss of Constantinople may be ascribed to the bullet, or arrow, which pierced the gauntlet of John Justiniani. The sight of his blood, and the exquisite pain, appalled the courage of the chief, whose arms and counsels were the firmest rampart of the city. As he withdrew from his station in quest of a surgeon, his flight was perceived and stopped by the indefatigable emperor. "Your wound," exclaimed Palæologus, "is slight; the danger is pressing; your presence is necessary; and whither will you retire?" "I will retire," said the trembling Genoese, "by the same road which God has opened to the Turks;" and at these words he hastily passed through one of the breaches of the inner wall. By this pusillanimous act, he stained the honours of a military life; and the few days which he survived in Galata, or the isle of Chios, were embittered by his own and the public reproach. His example was imitated by the greatest part of the Latin auxiliaries, and the defence began to slacken when the attack was pressed with redoubled vigour. The number of the Ottomans was fifty, perhaps an hundred, times superior to that of the Christians: the double walls were reduced by the

cannon to an heap of ruins: in a circuit of several miles, some places must be found more easy of access, or more feebly guarded; and if the besiegers could penetrate in a single point, the whole city was irrecoverably lost. The first who deserved the sultan's reward was Hassan the Janizary, of gigantic stature and strength. With his scymetar in one hand and his buckler in the other, he ascended the outward fortification: of the thirty Janizaries, who were emulous of his valour, eighteen perished in the bold adventure. Hassan and his twelve companions had reached the summit; the giant was precipitated from the rampart; he rose on one knee, and was again oppressed by a shower of darts and stones. But his success had proved that the achievement was possible: the walls and towers were instantly covered with a swarm of Turks; and the Greeks, now driven from the vantage ground, were overwhelmed by increasing multitudes. Amidst these multitudes, the emperor, who accomplished all the duties of a general and a soldier, was long seen, and finally lost. The nobles, who fought round his person, sustained till their last breath the honourable names of Palæologus and Cantacuzene: his mournful exclamation was heard, "Cannot there be found a Christian to cut off my head?" and his last fear was that of falling alive into the hands of the infidels. The prudent despair of Constantine cast away the purple: amidst the tumult he fell by an unknown hand, and his body was

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CHAP.  
LXVIII.  
Death of the  
emperor  
Constantine  
Palæologus.

Loss of the  
city and em-  
pire.

The Turks  
enter and  
pillage Con-  
stantinople.

buried under a mountain of the slain. After his death, resistance and order were no more: the Greeks fled toward the city; and many were pressed and stifled in the narrow pass of the gate of St. Romanus. The victorious Turks rushed through the breaches of the inner wall; and as they advanced into the streets, they were soon joined by their brethren, who had forced the gate Phenar on the side of the harbour ". In the first heat of the pursuit, about two thousand Christians were put to the sword; but avarice soon prevailed over cruelty; and the victors acknowledged, that they should immediately have given quarter if the valour of the emperor and his chosen bands had not prepared them for a similar opposition in every part of the capital. It was thus, after a siege of fifty-three days, that Constantinople, which had defied the power of Chosroes, the Chagan, and the caliphs, was irretrievably subdued by the arms of Mahomet the second. Her empire only had been subverted by the Latins: her religion was trampled in the dust by the Moslem conquerors ".

The tidings of misfortune fly with a rapid wing; yet such was the extent of Constantinople, that the more distant quarters might prolong some moments the happy ignorance of their ruin ". But in the general consternation, in the feelings of selfish or social anxiety, in the tumult and thunder of the assault, a *sleepless* night and morning must have elapsed; nor can I believe that many Grecian ladies were awakened by the

Janizaries from a sound and tranquil slumber. C H A P.

On the assurances of the public calamity, the I.XVIII.

houses and convents were instantly deserted; and the trembling inhabitants flocked together in the streets, like an herd of timid animals; as if accumulated weakness could be productive of strength, or in the vain hope, that amid the crowd, each individual might be safe and invincible. From every part of the capital, they flowed into the church of St. Sophia: in the space of an hour, the sanctuary, the choir, the nave, the upper and lower galleries, were filled with the multitudes of fathers and husbands, of women and children, of priests, monks, and religious virgins: the doors were barred on the inside, and they sought protection from the sacred dome, which they had so lately abhorred as a profane and polluted edifice. Their confidence was founded on the prophecy of an enthusiast or impostor; that one day the Turks would enter Constantinople, and pursue the Romans as far as the column of Constantine in the square before St. Sophia: but that this would be the term of their calamities: that an angel would descend from heaven, with a sword in his hand, and would deliver the empire, with that celestial weapon, to a poor man seated at the foot of the column. "Take this sword," would he say, "and avenge the people of the Lord." At these animating words, the Turks would instantly fly, and the victorious Romans would drive them from the West, and from all Anatolia, as far as the frontiers of Persia: It is on this occasion, that Ducas, with some fancy

**C H A P.** and much truth, upbraids the discord and obstinacy of the Greeks. "Had that angel appeared," exclaims the historian, "had he offered to exterminate your foes if you would consent to the union of the church, even then, in that fatal moment, you would have rejected your safety or have deceived your God."

**Captivity of  
the Greeks.**

While they expected the descent of the tardy angel, the doors were broken with axes; and as the Turks encountered no resistance, their bloodless hands were employed in selecting and securing the multitude of their prisoners. Youth, beauty, and the appearance of wealth, attracted their choice; and the right of property was decided among themselves by a prior seizure, by personal strength, and by the authority of command. In the space of an hour, the male captives were bound with cords, the females with their veils and girdles. The senators were linked with their slaves; the prelates, with the porters, of the church; and young men of a plebeian class, with noble maids, whose faces had been invisible to the sun and their nearest kindred. In this common captivity, the ranks of society were confounded; the ties of nature were cut asunder; and the inexorable soldier was careless of the father's groans, the tears of the mother, and the lamentations of the children. The loudest in their wailings were the nuns, who were torn from the altar with naked bosoms, outstretched hands, and dishevelled hair: and we should piously believe that few could be tempted to prefer the vigils of

the haram to those of the monastery. Of these unfortunate Greeks, of these domestic animals; whole strings were rudely driven through the streets; and as the conquerors were eager to return for more prey, their trembling pace was quickened with menaces and blows. At the same hour, a similar rapine was exercised in all the churches and monasteries, in all the palaces and habitations of the capital; nor could any place, however sacred or sequestered, protect the persons or the property of the Greeks. Above sixty thousand of this devoted people were transported from the city to the camp and fleet; exchanged or sold according to the caprice of interest of their masters, and dispersed in remote servitude through the provinces of the Ottoman empire. Among these we may notice some remarkable characters. The historian Phranza, first chamberlain and principal secretary, was involved with his family in the common lot. After suffering four months the hardships of slavery, he recovered his freedom; in the ensuing winter he ventured to Adrianople, and ransomed his wife from the *mir bashi* or master of the horse; but his two children, in the flower of youth and beauty, had been seized for the use of Mahomet himself. The daughter of Phranza died in the seraglio, perhaps a virgin: his son, in the fifteenth year of his age, preferred death to infamy, and was stabbed by the hand of the royal lover. A deed thus inhuman, cannot surely be expiated by the taste and liberality with which he released

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C H A P. 2 Grecian matron, and her two daughters, on  
 LXVIII. receiving a Latin ode from Philelphus, who had  
 chosen a wife in that noble family". The pride  
 or cruelty of Mahomet would have been most  
 sensibly gratified by the capture of a Roman  
 legate; but the dexterity of cardinal Isidore eluded  
 the search, and he escaped from Galata in a  
 plebeian habit". The chain and entrance of  
 the outward harbour was still occupied by the  
 Italian ships of merchandize and war. They had  
 signalized their valour in the siege; they em-  
 braced the moment of retreat while the Turkish  
 mariners were dissipated in the pillage of the  
 city. When they hoisted sail, the beach was  
 covered with a suppliant and lamentable crowd:  
 but the means of transportation were scanty:  
 the Venetians and Genoese selected their coun-  
 trymen; and, notwithstanding the fairest promises  
 of the sultan, the inhabitants of Galata evacuated  
 their houses, and embarked with their most pre-  
 cious effects.

Amount of  
 the spoil.

In the fall and the sack of great cities, an  
 historian is condemned to repeat the tale of uni-  
 form calamity: the same effects must be produced  
 by the same passions; and when those passions  
 may be indulged without control, small, alas!  
 is the difference between civilized and savage  
 man. Amidst the vague exclamations of bigotry  
 and hatred, the Turks are not accused of a wanton  
 or immoderate effusion of Christian blood: but  
 according to their maxims (the maxims of anti-  
 quity), the lives of the vanquished were forfeited;  
 and

and the legitimate reward of the conqueror was derived from the service, the sale, or the ransom, of his captives of both sexes". The wealth of Constantinople had been granted by the sultan to his victorious troops: and the rapine of an hour is more productive than the industry of years. But as no regular division was attempted of the spoil, the respective shares were not determined by merit; and the rewards of valour were stolen away by the followers of the camp, who had declined the toil and danger of the battle. The narrative of their depredations could not afford either amusement or instruction: the total amount, in the last poverty of the empire, has been valued at four millions of ducats<sup>70</sup>; and of this sum, a small part was the property of the Venetians, the Genoese, the Florentines, and the merchants of Ancona. Of these foreigners, the stock was improved in quick and perpetual circulation: but the riches of the Greeks were displayed in the idle ostentation of palaces and wardrobes, or deeply buried in treasures of ingots and old coin, lest it should be demanded at their hands for the defence of their country. The profanation and plunder of the monasteries and churches, excited the most tragic complaints. The dome of St. Sophia itself, the earthly heaven, the second firmament, the vehicle of the cherubim, the throne of the glory of God<sup>71</sup>, was despoiled of the oblations of ages; and the gold and silver, the pearls and jewels, the vases and sacerdotal ornaments, were most wickedly converted to the



**C H A P. LXVIII.** service of mankind. After the divine images had been stripped of all that could be valuable to a profane eye, the canvass, or the wood, was torn, or broken, or burnt, or trod under foot, or applied, in the stables or the kitchen, to the vilest uses. The example of sacrilege was imitated however from the Latin conquerors of Constantinople; and the treatment which Christ, the Virgin, and the saints, had sustained from the guilty Catholic, might be inflicted by the zealous Musulman on the monuments of idolatry. Perhaps, instead of joining the public clamour, a philosopher will observe, that in the decline of the arts, the workmanship could not be more valuable than the work, and that a fresh supply of visions and miracles would speedily be renewed by the craft of the priest and the credulity of the people. He will more seriously deplore the loss of the Byzantine libraries, which were destroyed or scattered in the general confusion: one hundred and twenty thousand manuscripts are said to have disappeared<sup>22</sup>; ten volumes might be purchased for a single ducat; and the same ignominious price, too high perhaps for a shelf of theology, included the whole works of Aristotle and Homer, the noblest productions of the science and literature of ancient Greece. We may reflect with pleasure, that an inestimable portion of our classic treasures was safely deposited in Italy; and that the mechanics of a German town had invented an art which derides the havoc of time and barbarism.

From the first hour<sup>71</sup> of the memorable twenty-  
 ninth of May, disorder and rapine prevailed in.  
 Constantinople, till the eighth hour of the same  
 day; when the sultan himself passed in triumph  
 through the gate of St. Romanus. He was at-  
 tended by his vizirs, bashaws, and guards, each  
 of whom (says a Byzantine historian) was robust  
 as Hercules, dextrous as Apollo, and equal in  
 battle to any ten of the race of ordinary mortals.  
 The conqueror<sup>72</sup> gazed with satisfaction and  
 wonder on the strange though splendid appearance  
 of the domes and palaces, so dissimilar from the  
 style of Oriental architecture. In the hippodrome,  
 or *atmeidan*, his eye was attracted by the twisted  
 column of the three serpents; and, as a trial of  
 his strength, he shattered with his iron mace or  
 battle-axe the under jaw of one of these monsters<sup>73</sup>,  
 which in the eyes of the Turks were the idols  
 or talismans of the city. At the principal door  
 of St. Sophia, he alighted from his horse, and  
 entered the dome: and such was his jealous regard  
 for that monument of his glory, that on observing  
 a zealous Musulman in the act of breaking the  
 marble pavement, he admonished him with his  
 scymetar, that, if the spoil and captives were  
 granted to the soldiers, the public and private  
 buildings had been reserved for the prince. By  
 his command, the metropolis of the Eastern  
 church was transformed into a mosch: the rich  
 and portable instruments of superstition had been  
 removed; the crosses were thrown down; and  
 the walls, which were covered with images

**C H A P.** and mosaics, were washed and purified, and re-  
**LXVIII.** stored to a state of naked simplicity. On the same day, or on the ensuing Friday, the *muezzin* or crier ascended the most lofty turret, and proclaimed the *ezan*, or public invitation in the name of God and his prophet; the imam preached; and Mahomet the second performed the *namaz* of prayer and thanksgiving on the great altar, where the Christian mysteries had so lately been celebrated before the last of the Cæsars". From St. Sophia he proceeded to the august, but desolate, mansion of an hundred successors of the great Constantine; but which in a few hours had been stripped of the pomp of royalty. A melancholy reflection on the vicissitudes of human greatness, forced itself on his mind; and he repeated an elegant distich of Persian poetry: "The spider  
 " has wove his web in the Imperial palace; and  
 " the owl hath sung her watch-song on the towers  
 " of Afrasiab".

His beha-  
 viour to the  
 Greeks.

Yet his mind was not satisfied, nor did the victory seem complete, till he was informed of the fate of Constantine; whether he had escaped, or been made prisoner, or had fallen in the battle. Two Janizaries claimed the honour and reward of his death: the body, under an heap of slain, was discovered by the golden eagles embroidered on his shoes: the Greeks acknowledged with tears the head of their late emperor; and, after exposing the bloody trophy", Mahomet bestowed on his rival the honours of a decent funeral. After his decease, Lucas Notaras, great duke",

and first minister of the empire, was the most important prisoner. When he offered his person and his treasures at the foot of the throne, "And why," said the indignant sultan, "did you not employ these treasures in the defence of your prince and country?" "They were yours," answered the slave, "God had reserved them for your hands." "If he reserved them for me," replied the despot, "how have you presumed to withhold them so long by a fruitless and fatal resistance?" The great duke alleged the obstinacy of the strangers, and some secret encouragement from the Turkish vizir; and from this perilous interview, he was at length dismissed with the assurance of pardon and protection. Mahomet condescended to visit his wife, a venerable princess oppressed with sickness and grief; and his consolation for her misfortunes was in the most tender strain of humanity and filial reverence. A similar clemency was extended to the principal officers of state, of whom several were ransomed at his expence; and during some days he declared himself the friend and father of the vanquished people. But the scene was soon changed; and before his departure, the hippodrome streamed with the blood of his noblest captives. His perfidious cruelty is execrated by the Christians: they adorn with the colours of heroic martyrdom the execution of the great duke and his two sons; and his death is ascribed to the generous refusal of delivering his children to the tyrant's lust. Yet a Byzantine historian has dropt

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CHAPTER. an unguarded word of conspiracy, deliverance;  
 LXVIII. and Italian succour: such treason may be glorious;  
 but the rebel who bravely ventures, has justly  
 forfeited, his life; nor should we blame a con-  
 queror for destroying the enemies whom he can  
 no longer trust. On the eighteenth of June, the  
 victorious sultan returned to Adrianople; and  
 smiled at the base and hollow embassies of the  
 Christian princes, who viewed their approaching  
 ruin in the fall of the Eastern empire.

He repeopled  
 and adorns  
 Constantinople.

Constantinople had been left naked and desolate,  
 without a prince or a people. But she could not  
 be despoiled of the incomparable situation which  
 marks her for the metropolis of a great empire; and  
 the genius of the place will ever triumph over the  
 accidents of time and fortune. Bursa and Adrianople,  
 the ancient seats of the Ottomans, sunk into provin-  
 cial towns; and Mahomet the second established  
 his own residence, and that of his successors, on  
 the same commanding spot which had been  
 chosen by Constantine. The fortifications of  
 Galata, which might afford a shelter to the Latins,  
 were prudently destroyed; but the damage of  
 the Turkish cannon was soon repaired; and before  
 the month of August, great quantities of lime  
 had been burnt for the restoration of the walls of  
 the capital. As the entire property of the soil and  
 buildings, whether public or private, or profane  
 or sacred, was now transferred to the conqueror,  
 he first separated a space of eight furlongs from  
 the point of the triangle for the establishment of  
 his seraglio or palace. It is here, in the bosom

of luxury, that the *grand signor* (as he has been C H A P.  
LXVIII.  
 emphatically named by the Italians) appears to reign over Europe and Asia; but his person on the shores of the Bosphorus may not always be secure from the insults of an hostile navy. In the new character of a mosch, the cathedral of St. Sophia was endowed with an ample revenue, crowned with lofty minarets, and surrounded with groves and fountains, for the devotion and refreshment of the Moslems. The same model was imitated in the *jami* or royal moschs; and the first of these was built, by Mahomet himself, on the ruins of the church of the holy apostles and the tombs of the Greek emperors. On the third day after the conquest, the grave of Abu Ayub or Job, who had fallen in the first siege of the Arabs, was revealed in a vision; and it is before the sepulchre of the martyr, that the new sultans are girded with the sword of empire". Constantinople no longer appertains to the Roman historian; nor shall I enumerate the civil and religious edifices that were profaned or erected by its Turkish masters: the population was speedily renewed; and before the end of September, five thousand families of Anatolia and Romania had obeyed the royal mandate, which enjoined them, under pain of death, to occupy their new habitations in the capital. The throne of Mahomet was guarded by the numbers and fidelity of his Moslem subjects: but his rational policy aspired to collect the remnant of the

## 56 THE DECLINE AND FALL

C H A P. LXVIII. Greeks; and they returned in crowds, as soon as they were assured of their lives, their liberties, and the free exercise of their religion. In the election and investiture of a patriarch, the ceremonial of the Byzantine court was revived and imitated. With a mixture of satisfaction and horror, they beheld the sultan on his throne; who delivered into the hands of Gennadius the crozier or pastoral staff, the symbol of his ecclesiastical office; who conducted the patriarch to the gate of the seraglio, presented him with an horse richly caparisoned, and directed the vizirs and bashaws to lead him to the palace which had been allotted for his residence". The churches of Constantinople were shared between the two religions: their limits were marked; and till it was infringed by Selim the grandson of Mahomet, the Greeks " enjoyed above sixty years the benefit of this equal partition. Encouraged by the ministers of the divan, who wished to elude the fanaticism of the sultan, the Christian advocates presumed to allege that this division had been an act, not of generosity, but of justice; not a concession, but a compact; and that if one half of the city had been taken by storm, the other moiety had surrendered on the faith of a sacred capitulation. The original grant had indeed been consumed by fire: but the loss was supplied by the testimony of three aged Janizaries who remembered the transaction; and their venal oaths are of more weight in the opinion of Cantemir,

than the positive and unanimous consent of the history of the times “.

LXVIII.

The remaining fragments of the Greek kingdom in Europe and Asia I shall abandon to the Turkish arms; but the final extinction of the two last dynasties “ which have reigned in Constantinople, should terminate the decline and fall of the Roman empire in the East. The despots of the Morea, Demetrius and Thomas “, the two surviving brothers of the name of PALÆOLOGUS, were astonished by the death of the emperor Constantine, and the ruin of the monarchy. Hopeless of defence, they prepared with the noble Greeks who adhered to their fortune, to seek a refuge in Italy, beyond the reach of the Ottoman thunder. Their first apprehensions were dispelled by the victorious sultan, who contented himself with a tribute of twelve thousand ducats; and while his ambition explored the continent and the islands in search of prey, he indulged the Morea in a respite of seven years. But this respite was a period of grief, discord, and misery. The *hexamilion*, the rampart of the Isthmus, so often raised and so often subverted, could not long be defended by three hundred Italian archers: the keys of Corinth were seized by the Turks: they returned from their summer excursions with a train of captives and spoil; and the complaints of the injured Greeks were heard with indifference and disdain. The Albanians, a vagrant tribe of shepherds and robbers, filled

Extinction of  
the Imperial  
families of  
Comnenus  
and Palæolo-  
gus.



## 58 THE DECLINE AND FALL

C H A P. the peninsula with rapine and murder: the two  
 LXVIII. despots implored the dangerous and humiliating  
 aid of a neighbouring bashaw; and when he  
 had quelled the revolt, his lessons inculcated the  
 rule of their future conduct. Neither the ties of  
 blood, nor the oaths which they repeatedly  
 pledged in the communion and before the altar,  
 nor the stronger pressure of necessity, could  
 reconcile or suspend their domestic quarrels. They  
 ravaged each other's patrimony with fire and  
 sword: the alms and succours of the West were  
 consumed in civil hostility; and their power was  
 only exerted in savage and arbitrary executions.  
 The distress and revenge of the weaker rival  
 invoked their supreme lord; and, in the season  
 of maturity and revenge, Mahomet declared  
 himself the friend of Demetrius, and marched  
 into the Morea with an irresistible force. When  
 he had taken possession of Sparta, "You are too  
 weak," said the sultan, "to control this  
 turbulent province: I will take your daughter  
 to my bed; and you shall pass the remainder  
 of your life in security and honour." Demetrius  
 sighed and obeyed; surrendered his daughter and  
 his castles; followed to Adrianople his sovereign  
 and son; and received for his own maintenance,  
 and that of his followers, a city in Thrace,  
 and the adjacent isles of Imbros, Lemnos, and  
 Samothrace. He was joined the next year by a  
 companion of misfortune, the last of the  
 COMNENIAN race, who, after the taking of

Lost of the  
 Morea,  
 A. D. 1460.

Constantinople by the Latins, had founded a new empire on the coast of the Black Sea". In the progress of his Anatolian conquests, Mahomet invested with a fleet and army the capital of David, who presumed to style himself emperor of Trebizond"; and the negociation was comprised in a short and peremptory question, "Will you secure your life and treasures by resigning your kingdom? or had you rather forfeit your kingdom, your treasures, and your life?" The feeble Comnenus was subdued by his own fears, and the example of a Musulman neighbour, the prince of Sinope", who, on a similar summons, had yielded a fortified city with four hundred cannon and ten or twelve thousand foldiers. The capitulation of Trebizond was faithfully performed; and the emperor, with his family, was transported to a castle in Romania: but on a slight suspicion of corresponding with the Persian king, David, and the whole Comnenian race, were sacrificed to the jealousy or avarice of the conqueror. Nor could the name of father long protect the unfortunate Demetrius from exile and confiscation; his abject submission moved the pity and contempt of the sultan; his followers were transplanted to Constantinople; and his poverty was alleviated by a pension of fifty thousand aspers, till a monastic habit and a tardy death released Palæologus from an earthly master. It is not easy to pronounce whether the servitude of Demetrius, or the exile of his brother

C H A P.  
LXVIII.  
of Trebi-  
zond,  
A. D. 1461.

## 60 THE DECLINE AND FALL

C H A P. Thomas'', be the most inglorious. On the conquest  
LXVIII. of the Morea, the despot escaped to Corfu, and from thence to Italy, with some naked adherents: his name, his sufferings, and the head of the apostle St. Andrew, entitled him to the hospitality of the Vatican; and his misery was prolonged by a pension of six thousand ducats from the pope and cardinals. His two sons, Andrew and Manuel, were educated in Italy; but the eldest, contemptible to his enemies and burthensome to his friends, was degraded by the baseness of his life and marriage. A title was his sole inheritance; and that inheritance he successively sold to the kings of France and Arragon''. During his transient prosperity, Charles the eighth was ambitious of joining the empire of the East with the kingdom of Naples: in a public festival, he assumed the appellation and the purple of *Augustus*: the Greeks rejoiced, and the Ottoman already trembled, at the approach of the French chivalry''. Manuel Palæologus, the second son, was tempted to revisit his native country: his return might be grateful, and could not be dangerous, to the Porte: he was maintained at Constantinople in safety and ease; and an honourable train of Christians and Moslems attended him to the grave. If there be some animals of so generous a nature that they refuse to propagate in a domestic state, the last of the Imperial race must be ascribed to an inferior kind: he accepted from the sultan's liberality two beautiful females;

## OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE. 61

and his surviving son was lost in the habit and religion of a Turkish slave. C H A P. LXVIII.

The importance of Constantinople was felt and magnified in its loss: the pontificate of Nicholas the fifth, however peaceful and prosperous, was dishonoured by the fall of the Eastern empire; and the grief and terror of the Latins revived, or seemed to revive, the old enthusiasm of the crusades. In one of the most distant countries of the West, Philip duke of Burgundy entertained, at Lisle in Flanders, an assembly of his nobles; and the pompous pageants of the feast were skilfully adapted to their fancy and feelings. In the midst of the banquet, a gigantic Saracen entered the hall, leading a fictitious elephant, with a castle on his back: a matron in a mourning robe, the symbol of religion, was seen to issue from the castle; she deplored her oppression, and accused the slowness of her champions: the principal herald of the golden fleece advanced, bearing on his fist a live pheasant, which, according to the rites of chivalry, he presented to the duke. At this extraordinary summons, Philip, a wise and aged prince, engaged his person and powers in the holy war against the Turks: his example was imitated by the barons and knights of the assembly; they swore to God, the Virgin, the ladies, and the *pheasant*; and their particular vows were not less extravagant than the general sanction of their oath. But the performance was made to depend on some future and

Grief and  
terror of  
Europe,  
A. D. 1453.

## 62 THE DECLINE AND FALL

C H A P. foreign contingency; and, during twelve years,  
LXVIII. till the last hour of his life, the duke of Burgundy might be scrupulously, and perhaps sincerely, on the eve of his departure. Had every breast glowed with the same ardour; had the union of the Christians corresponded with their bravery; had every country, from Sweden " to Naples, supplied a just proportion of cavalry and infantry, of men and money, it is indeed probable that Constantinople would have been delivered, and that the Turks might have been chased beyond the Hellespont or the Euphrates. But the secretary of the emperor, who composed every epistle, and attended every meeting, Æneas Sylvius ", a statesman and orator, describes from his own experience the repugnant state and spirit of Christendom, " It is a body," says he, " without  
" an head; a republic without laws or magistrates.  
" The pope and the emperor may shine as lofty  
" titles, as splendid images, but *they* are unable to  
" command, and none are willing to obey: every  
" state has a separate prince, and every prince has  
" a separate interest. What eloquence could unite  
" so many discordant and hostile powers under  
" the same standard? Could they be assembled  
" in arms, who would dare to assume the office  
" of general? What order could be maintain-  
" ed? — what military discipline? Who would  
" undertake to feed such an enormous multitude?  
" Who would understand their various languages  
" or direct their stranger and incompatible manners?

" What mortal could reconcile the English c H A P.  
 " with the French, Genoa with Arragon, the LXVIII.  
 " Germans with the natives of Hungary and  
 " Bohemia? If a small number enlisted in the  
 " holy war, they must be overthrown by the  
 " infidels; if many, by their own weight and  
 " confusion." Yet the same Æneas, when he  
 was raised to the papal throne, under the name  
 of Pius the second, devoted his life to the pro-  
 secution of the Turkish war. In the council of  
 Mantua he excited some sparks of a false or feeble  
 enthusiasm; but when the pontiff appeared at  
 Ancona to embark in person with the troops,  
 engagements vanished in excuses; a precise day  
 was adjourned to an indefinite term; and his  
 effective army consisted of some German pilgrims,  
 whom he was obliged to disband with indul-  
 gences and alms. Regardless of futurity, his  
 successors and the powers of Italy were involved  
 in the schemes of present and domestic ambition,  
 and the distance or proximity of each object  
 determined, in their eyes, its apparent magnitude.  
 A more enlarged view of their interest would have  
 taught them to maintain a defensive and naval  
 war against the common enemy; and the support  
 of Scanderbeg and his brave Albanians, might  
 have prevented the subsequent invasion of the  
 kingdom of Naples. The siege and sack of  
 Otranto by the Turks, diffused a general con-  
 sternation; and pope Sixtus was preparing to fly  
 beyond the Alps, when the storm was instantly

## 64 THE DECLINE AND FALL

**C H A P** dispelled by the death of Mahomet the second,  
**LXVIII.** in the fifty-first year of his age ". His lofty  
genius aspired to the conquest of Italy: he was  
possessed of a strong city and a capacious harbour;  
and the same reign might have been decorated  
with the trophies of the NEW and the ANCIENT  
ROME ".  
**Death of**  
**Mahomet II.**  
**A. D. 1481,**  
**May 3, or**  
**July 2.**

**C H A P.**

C H A P. LXIX.

*State of Rome from the Twelfth Century. — Temporal Dominion of the Popes. — Seditions of the City. — Political Heresy of Arnold of Brescia. — Restoration of the Republic. — The Senators. — Pride of the Romans. — Their Wars. — They are deprived of the Election and Presence of the Popes, who retire to Avignon. — The Jubilee. — Noble Families of Rome. — Feud of the Colonna and Ursini.*

**I**N the first ages of the decline and fall of the Roman empire, our eye is invariably fixed on the royal city, which had given laws to the fairest portion of the globe. We contemplate her fortunes, at first with admiration, at length with pity, always with attention; and when that attention is diverted from the Capitol to the provinces, they are considered as so many branches which have been successively severed from the Imperial trunk. The foundation of a second Rome, on the shores of the Bosphorus, has compelled the historian to follow the successors of Constantine; and our curiosity has been tempted to visit the most remote countries of Europe and Asia, to explore the causes and the authors of the long decay of the Byzantine monarchy. By the conquests of Justinian, we have been recalled to the

C H A P.  
LXIX.  
State and  
revolutions  
of Rome,  
A. D.  
1100—1500.

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F



C H A P. banks of the Tyber, to the deliverance of the  
 LXIX. ancient metropolis; but that deliverance was a  
 change, or perhaps an aggravation, of servitude. Rome had been already stripped of her trophies, her gods, and her Cæsars: nor was the Gothic dominion more inglorious and oppressive than the tyranny of the Greeks. In the eighth century of the Christian æra, a religious quarrel, the worship of images, provoked the Romans to assert their independence: their bishop became the temporal, as well as the spiritual, father of a free people; and of the Western empire, which was restored by Charlemagne, the title and image still decorate the singular constitution of modern Germany. The name of Rome must yet command our involuntary respect: the climate (whatsoever may be its influence) was no longer the same: the purity of blood had been contaminated through a thousand channels; but the venerable aspect of her ruins, and the memory of past greatness, rekindled a spark of the national character. The darkness of the middle ages exhibits some scenes not unworthy of our notice. Nor shall I dismiss the present work till I have reviewed the state and revolutions of the ROMAN CITY, which acquiesced under the absolute dominion of the popes about the same time that Constantinople was enslaved by the Turkish arms.

The French  
 and German  
 emperors of  
 Rome,  
 A. D.  
 1800—1800.

IN the beginning of the twelfth century, the æra of the first crusade, Rome was revered by the Latins, as the metropolis of the world, as the throne of the pope and the emperor, who,

from the eternal city, derived their title, their honours, and the right or exercise of temporal dominion. After so long an interruption, it may not be useless to repeat that the successors of Charlemagne and the Othos were chosen beyond the Rhine in a national diet; but that these princes were content with the humble names of kings of Germany and Italy, till they had passed the Alps and the Apennine, to seek their Imperial crown on the banks of the Tyber'. At some distance from the city, their approach was saluted by a long procession of the clergy and people with palms and crosses; and the terrific emblems of wolves and lions, of dragons and eagles, that floated in the military banners, represented the departed legions and cohorts of the republic. The royal oath to maintain the liberties of Rome was thrice reiterated, at the bridge, the gate, and on the stairs of the Vatican; and the distribution of a customary donative feebly imitated the magnificence of the first Cæsars. In the church of St. Peter, the coronation was performed by his successor: the voice of God was confounded with that of the people; and the public consent was declared in the acclamations of, "Long life" and victory to our lord the pope! Long life" and victory to our lord the emperor; Long" life and victory to the Roman and Teutonic" armies!" The names of Cæsar and Augustus, the laws of Constantine and Justinian, the example of Charlemagne and Otho, established the supreme dominion of the emperors; their title and image

CHAP. was engraved on the papal coins<sup>6</sup>; and their  
 LXIX. jurisdiction was marked by the sword of justice;  
 which they delivered to the præfect of the city.  
 But every Roman prejudice was awakened by  
 the name; the language, and the manners, of a  
 Barbarian lord. The Cæsars of Saxony or Fran-  
 conia were the chiefs of a feudal aristocracy; nor  
 could they exercise the discipline of civil and  
 military power, which alone secures the obedience  
 of a distant people, impatient of servitude, though  
 perhaps incapable of freedom. Once, and once  
 only, in his life, each emperor, with an army  
 of Teutonic vassals, descended from the Alps.  
 I have described the peaceful order of his entry  
 and coronation; but that order was commonly  
 disturbed by the clamour and sedition of the Ro-  
 mans, who encountered their sovereign as a  
 foreign invader: his departure was always speedy,  
 and often shameful; and, in the absence of a  
 long reign, his authority was insulted and his  
 name was forgotten. The progress of independ-  
 ence in Germany and Italy undermined the  
 foundations of the Imperial sovereignty, and the  
 triumph of the popes was the deliverance of  
 Rome.

Authority of  
 the popes in  
 Rome,

Of her two sovereigns, the emperor had pre-  
 cariously reigned by the right of conquest; but  
 the authority of the pope was founded on the  
 soft, though more solid, basis of opinion and  
 habit. The removal of a foreign influence restor-  
 ed and endeared the shepherd to his flock.  
 Instead of the arbitrary or venal nomination of a

German court ; the vicar of Christ was freely chosen by the college of cardinals , most of whom were either natives or inhabitants of the city. The applause of the magistrates and people confirmed his election : and the ecclesiastical power that was obeyed in Sweden and Britain , had been ultimately derived from the suffrage of the Romans. The same suffrage gave a prince , as well as a pontiff , to the capital. It was universally believed , that Constantine had invested the popes with the temporal dominion of Rome ; and the boldest civilians , the most profane sceptics , were satisfied with disputing the right of the emperor and the validity of his gift. The truth of the fact , the authenticity of his donation , was deeply rooted in the ignorance and tradition of four centuries : and the fabulous origin was lost in the real and permanent effects. The name of *Dominus* or Lord was inscribed on the coin of the bishops : their title was acknowledged by acclamations and oaths of allegiance , and with the free , or reluctant , consent of the German Cæsars , they had long exercised a supreme or subordinate jurisdiction over the city and patrimony of St. Peter. The reign of the popes , which gratified the prejudices , was not incompatible with the liberties , of Rome ; and a more critical enquiry would have revealed a still nobler source of their power ; the gratitude of a nation , whom they had rescued from the heresy and oppression of the Greek tyrant. In an age of superstition , it should seem that the union of the royal

## 70 THE DECLINE AND FALL

**CHAP.** and sacerdotal characters would mutually fortify  
**LXIX.** each other; and that the keys of paradise would  
 be the surest pledge of earthly obedience. The  
 sanctity of the office might indeed be degraded  
 by the personal vices of the man. But the scan-  
 dals of the tenth century were obliterated by the  
 austere and more dangerous virtues of Gregory  
 the seventh and his successors; and in the ambi-  
 tious contests which they maintained for the  
 rights of the church, their sufferings or their suc-  
 cesses must equally tend to increase the popular  
 veneration. They sometimes wandered in poverty  
 and exile, the victims of persecution; and the  
 apostolic zeal with which they offered themselves  
 to martyrdom, must engage the favour and  
 sympathy of every Catholic breast. And some-  
 times, thundering from the Vatican, they created,  
 judged, and deposed the kings of the world;  
 nor could the proudest Roman be disgraced by  
 submitting to a priest, whose feet were kissed,  
 and whose stirrup was held, by the successors  
 of Charlemagne. Even the temporal interest of  
 the city should have protected in peace and  
 honour the residence of the popes; from whence  
 a vain and lazy people derived the greatest part  
 of their subsistence and riches. The fixed revenue  
 of the popes was probably impaired: many of  
 the old patrimonial estates, both in Italy and the  
 provinces, had been invaded by sacrilegious  
 hands; nor could the loss be compensated by  
 the claim, rather than the possession, of the more  
 ample gifts of Pepin and his descendants. But

the Vatican and Capitol were nourished by the incessant and increasing swarms of pilgrims and suppliants: the pale of Christianity was enlarged, and the pope and cardinals were overwhelmed by the judgment of ecclesiastical and secular causes. A new jurisprudence had established in the Latin church the right and practice of appeals; and, from the north and west, the bishops and abbots were invited or summoned to solicit, to complain, to accuse, or to justify, before the threshold of the apostles. A rare prodigy is once recorded, that two horses, belonging to the archbishops of Mentz and Cologne, repassed the Alps, yet laden with gold and silver: but it was soon understood, that the success, both of the pilgrims and clients, depended much less on the justice of their cause than on the value of their offering. The wealth and piety of these strangers were ostentatiously displayed; and their expences, sacred or profane, circulated in various channels for the emolument of the Romans.

Such powerful motives should have firmly attached the voluntary and pious obedience of the Roman people to their spiritual and temporal father. But the operation of prejudice and interest is often disturbed by the fallies of ungovernable passion. The Indian who sells the tree, that he may gather the fruit, and the Arab who plunders the caravans of commerce, are actuated by the same impulse of savage nature, which overlooks the future in the present, and relinquishes for momentary rapine the long and secure possession.

CHAP. of the most important blessings. And it was  
 LXIX. thus, that the shrine of St. Peter was profaned  
 by the thoughtless Romans; who pillaged the  
 offerings, and wounded the pilgrims, without  
 computing the number and value of similar visits,  
 which they prevented by their inhospitable sacri-  
 lege. Even the influence of superstition is fluc-  
 tuating and precarious: and the slave, whose  
 reason is subdued, will often be delivered by his  
 avarice or pride. A credulous devotion for the  
 fables and oracles of the priesthood, most power-  
 fully acts on the mind of a Barbarian: yet such  
 a mind is the least capable of preferring imagina-  
 tion to sense, of sacrificing to a distant motive,  
 to an invisible, perhaps an ideal, object, the ap-  
 petites and interests of the present world. In the  
 vigour of health and youth, his practice will per-  
 petually contradict his belief; till the pressure of  
 age, or sickness, or calamity, awakens his ter-  
 rors, and compels him to satisfy the double debt  
 of piety and remorse. I have already observed,  
 that the modern times of religious indifference,  
 are the most favourable to the peace and security  
 of the clergy. Under the reign of superstition,  
 they had much to hope from the ignorance, and  
 much to fear from the violence, of mankind.  
 The wealth, whose constant increase must have  
 rendered them the sole proprietors of the earth,  
 was alternately bestowed by the repentant father  
 and plundered by the rapacious son: their persons  
 were adored or violated; and the same idol, by  
 the hands of the same votaries, was placed on the

altar or trampled in the dust. In the feudal system of Europe, arms were the title of distinction and the measure of allegiance; and amidst their tumult, the still voice of law and reason was seldom heard or obeyed. The turbulent Romans disdained the yoke, and insulted the impotence, of their bishop<sup>10</sup>; nor would his education or character allow him to exercise, with decency or effect, the power of the sword. The motives of his election and the frailties of his life were exposed to their familiar observation; and proximity must diminish the reverence, which his name and his decrees impressed on a barbarous world. This difference has not escaped the notice of our philosophic historian: "Though the name and authority of the court of Rome were so terrible in the remote countries of Europe, which were sunk in profound ignorance, and were entirely unacquainted with its character and conduct, the pope was so little revered at home, that his inveterate enemies surrounded the gates of Rome itself, and even controlled his government in that city; and the ambassadors, who, from a distant extremity of Europe, carried to him the humble, or rather abject, submissions of the greatest potentate of the age, found the utmost difficulty to make their way to him, and to throw themselves at his feet<sup>11</sup>."

Since the primitive times, the wealth of the popes was exposed to envy, their power to opposition, and their persons to violence. But the long hostility of the mitre and the crown increased

C H A' P.

LXIX.

Seditions of Rome against the popes.

Successors of Gregory VII.  
A. D.

1086—1304.



C H A P. the numbers, and inflamed the passions, of their  
 LXIX. enemies. The deadly factions of the Guelphs and Ghibelines, so fatal to Italy, could never be embraced with truth or constancy by the Romans, the subjects and adversaries both of the bishop and emperor; but their support was solicited by both parties; and they alternately displayed in their banners the keys of S. Peter and the German eagle. Gregory the seventh, who may be adored or detested as the founder of the papal monarchy, was driven from Rome, and died in exile at Salerno. Six-and-thirty of his successors<sup>12</sup>, till their retreat to Avignon, maintained an unequal contest with the Romans: their age and dignity were often violated; and the churches, in the solemn rites of religion, were polluted with sedition and murder. A repetition<sup>13</sup> of such capricious brutality, without connection or design, would be tedious and disgusting; and I shall content myself with some events of the twelfth century, which represent the state of the popes and the city. On Holy Thursday, while Paschal officiated before the altar, he was interrupted by the clamours of the multitude, who imperiously demanded the confirmation of a favourite magistrate. His silence exasperated their fury: his pious refusal to mingle the affairs of earth and heaven was encountered with menaces and oaths, that he should be the cause and the witness of the public ruin. During the festival of Easter, while the bishop and the clergy, bare-foot and in procession, visited the tombs of the

Paschal II.  
 A. D.  
 1099—1118

martyrs, they were twice assaulted, at the bridge of St. Angelo, and before the Capitol, with volleys of stones and darts. The houses of his adherents were levelled with the ground: Paschal escaped with difficulty and danger: he levied an army in the patrimony of St. Peter; and his last days were embittered by suffering and inflicting the calamities of civil war. The scenes that followed the election of his successor Gelasius the second were still more scandalous to the church and city. Cencio Frangipani<sup>14</sup>, a potent and factious baron, burst into the assembly furious and in arms: the cardinals were stripped, beaten, and trampled under foot; and he seized, without pity or respect, the vicar of Christ by the throat. Gelasius was dragged by his hair along the ground, buffeted with blows, wounded with spurs, and bound with an iron chain in the house of his brutal tyrant. An insurrection of the people delivered their bishop: the rival families opposed the violence of the Frangipani; and Cencio, who sued for pardon, repented of the failure, rather than of the guilt, of his enterprise. Not many days had elapsed, when the pope was again assaulted at the altar. While his friends and enemies were engaged in a bloody contest he escaped in his sacerdotal garments. In this unworthy flight, which excited the compassion of the Roman matrons, his attendants were scattered or unhorsed; and, in the fields behind the church of St. Peter, his successor was found alone and half dead with fear and fatigue. Shaking

C H A P.  
LXIX.

Gelasius II.  
A. D.  
1118, 1119.

C H A P. the dust from his feet, the *apostle* withdrew from  
 LXIX. a city in which his dignity was insulted and his  
 person was endangered; and the vanity of sacer-  
 dotal ambition is revealed in the involuntary con-  
 fession, that one emperor was more tolerable than  
 twenty". These examples might suffice; but I  
 cannot forget the sufferings of two pontiffs of the  
 same age, the second and third of the name of  
 Lucius. The former, as he ascended in battle-  
 array to assault the Capitol, was struck on the  
 temple by a stone, and expired in a few days.  
 The latter was severely wounded in the persons  
 of his servants. In a civil commotion, several  
 of his priests had been made prisoners; and the  
 inhuman Romans, reserving one as a guide for  
 his brethren, put out their eyes, crowned them  
 with ludicrous mitres, mounted them on asses  
 with their faces to the tail, and extorted an oath,  
 that, in this wretched condition, they should  
 offer themselves as a lesson to the head of the  
 church. Hope or fear, lassitude or remorse, the  
 characters of the men, and the circumstances of  
 the times, might sometimes obtain an interval of  
 peace and obedience; and the pope was restored  
 with joyful acclamations to the Lateran or Vati-  
 can, from whence he had been driven with threats  
 and violence. But the root of mischief was deep  
 and perennial; and a momentary calm was pre-  
 ceded and followed by such tempests as had  
 almost sunk the bark of St. Peter. Rome con-  
 tinually presented the aspect of war and discord:  
 the churches and palaces were fortified and

Lucius II.  
 A. D.  
 1144, 1145.  
 Lucius III.  
 A. D.  
 1181—1185.

assaulted by the factions and families; and, after giving peace to Europe, Calistus the second alone had resolution and power to prohibit the use of private arms in the metropolis. Among the nations who revered the apostolic throne, the tumults of Rome provoked a general indignation; and, in a letter to his disciple Eugenius the third, St. Bernard, with the sharpness of his wit and zeal, has stigmatized the vices of the rebellious people<sup>16</sup>. "Who is ignorant," says the monk of Clairvaux, "of the vanity and arrogance of the Romans? a nation nursed in sedition, cruel, untractable, and scoffing to obey, unless they are too feeble to resist. When they promise to serve, they aspire to reign; if they swear allegiance, they watch the opportunity of revolt; yet they vent their discontent in loud clamours if your doors, or your counsels, are shut against them. Dextrous in mischief, they have never learnt the science of doing good. Odious to earth and heaven, impious to God, seditious among themselves, jealous of their neighbours, inhuman to strangers, they love no one, by no one are they beloved; and while they wish to inspire fear, they live in base and continual apprehension. They will not submit; they know how to govern; faithless to their superiors, intolerable to their equals, ungrateful to their benefactors, and alike impudent in their demands and their refusals. Lofty in promise, poor in execution: adulation and calumny, perfidy and treason, are the familiar

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Calistus II.

A. D.

1119—1124.

Innocent II.

A. D.

1130—1143.

 Character of  
the Romans  
by St. Ber-  
nard.

C H. A. P. "arts of their policy." Surely this dark portrait  
 LXIX. is not coloured by the pencil of Christian charity<sup>17</sup>; yet the features, however harsh and ugly, express a lively resemblance of the Romans of the twelfth century<sup>18</sup>.

Political heresy of Arnold of Brescia,  
 A. D. 1140.

The Jews had rejected the Christ when he appeared among them in a plebeian character; and the Romans might plead their ignorance of his vicar when he assumed the pomp and pride of a temporal sovereign. In the busy age of the crusades, some sparks of curiosity and reason were rekindled in the Western world: the heresy of Bulgaria, the Paphlagonian sect, was successfully transplanted into the soil of Italy and France; the Gnostic visions were mingled with the simplicity of the gospel; and the enemies of the clergy reconciled their passions with their conscience, the desire of freedom with the profession of piety<sup>19</sup>. The trumpet of Roman liberty was first sounded by Arnold of Brescia<sup>20</sup>, whose promotion in the church was confined to the lowest rank, and who wore the monastic habit rather as a garb of poverty than as an uniform of obedience. His adversaries could not deny the wit and eloquence which they severely felt: they confessed with reluctance the specious purity of his morals; and his errors were recommended to the public by a mixture of important and beneficial truths. In his theological studies, he had been the disciple of the famous and unfortunate Abelard<sup>21</sup>, who was likewise involved in the suspicion of heresy: but the lover of Eloisa was of a soft and

flexible nature; and his ecclesiastic judges were edified and disarmed by the humility of his repentance. From this master, Arnold most probably imbibed some metaphysical definitions of the Trinity, repugnant to the taste of the times: his ideas of baptism and the eucharist are loosely censured; but a *political* heresy was the source of his fame and misfortunes. He presumed to quote the declaration of Christ, that his kingdom is not of this world: he boldly maintained, that the sword and the sceptre were entrusted to the civil magistrate; that temporal honours and possessions were lawfully vested in secular persons; that the abbots, the bishops, and the pope himself, must renounce either their state or their salvation; and that after the loss of their revenues, the voluntary tithes and oblations of the faithful would suffice, not indeed for luxury and avarice, but for a frugal life in the exercise of spiritual labours. During a short time, the preacher was revered as a patriot; and the discontent, or revolt, of Brescia against her bishop, was the first fruits of his dangerous lessons. But the favour of the people is less permanent than the resentment of the priest; and after the heresy of Arnold had been condemned by Innocent the second<sup>22</sup>, in the general council of the Lateran, the magistrates themselves were urged by prejudice and fear to execute the sentence of the church. Italy could no longer afford a refuge; and the disciple of Abelard escaped beyond the Alps, till he found a safe and hospitable shelter in Zurich, now

CHAP. the first of the Swiss cantons. From a Roman station", a royal villa, a chapter of noble virgins, Zurich had gradually increased to a free and flourishing city; where the appeals of the Milanese were sometimes tried by the Imperial commissaries". In an age less ripe for reformation, the præcursor of Zuinglius was heard with applause: a brave and simple people imbibed and long retained the colour of his opinions; and his art, or merit, seduced the bishop of Constance, and even the pope's legate, who forgot, for his sake, the interest of their master and their order. Their tardy zeal was quickened by the fierce exhortations of St. Bernard"; and the enemy of the church was driven by persecution to the desperate measure of erecting his standard in Rome itself, in the face of the successor of St. Peter.

He exhorts  
the Romans  
to restore the  
republic,

A. D.

1144.—1154

Yet the courage of Arnold was not devoid of discretion; he was protected, and had perhaps been invited, by the nobles and people; and in the service of freedom, his eloquence thundered over the seven hills. Blending in the same discourse the texts of Livy and St. Paul, uniting the motives of gospel, and of classic, enthusiasm; he admonished the Romans, how strangely their patience and the vices of the clergy had degenerated from the primitive times of the church and the city. He exhorted them to assert the inalienable rights of men and Christians; to restore the laws and magistrates of the republic; to respect the *name* of the emperor; but to confine their

their shepherd to the spiritual government of his flock<sup>26</sup>. Nor could his spiritual government, escape the censure and control of the reformer; and the inferior clergy were taught by his lessons to resist the cardinals, who had usurped a despotic command over the twenty-eight regions or parishes of Rome<sup>27</sup>. The revolution was not accomplished without rapine and violence, the effusion of blood and the demolition of houses: the victorious faction was enriched with the spoils of the clergy and the adverse nobles. Arnold of Brescia enjoyed, or deplored, the effects of his mission: his reign continued above ten years, while two popes, Innocent the second and Anastasius the fourth, either trembled in the Vatican, or wandered as exiles in the adjacent cities. They were succeeded by a more vigorous and fortunate pontiff, Adrian the fourth<sup>28</sup>, the only Englishman who has ascended the throne of St. Peter; and whose merit emerged from the mean condition of a monk, and almost a beggar, in the monastery of St. Albans. On the first provocation, of a cardinal killed or wounded in the streets, he cast an interdict on the guilty people; and from Christmas to Easter, Rome was deprived of the real or imaginary comforts of religious worship. The Romans had despised their temporal prince; they submitted with grief and terror to the censures of their spiritual father; their guilt was expiated by penance, and the banishment of the seditious preacher was the price of their absolution. — But the revenge of Adrian was yet



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unsatisfied, and the approaching coronation of Frederic Barbarossa was fatal to the bold reformer, who had offended, though not in an equal degree, the heads of the church and state. In their interview at Viterbo, the pope represented to the emperor the furious ungovernable spirit of the Romans: the insults, the injuries, the fears, to which his person and his clergy were continually exposed; and the pernicious tendency of the heresy of Arnold, which must subvert the principles of civil, as well as ecclesiastical, subordination. Frederic was convinced by these arguments, or tempted by the desire of the Imperial crown; in the balance of ambition, the innocence or life of an individual is of small account; and their common enemy was sacrificed to a moment of political concord. After his retreat from Rome, Arnold had been protected by the viscounts of Campania, from whom he was extorted by the power of Cæsar: the præfect of the city pronounced his sentence; the martyr of freedom was burnt alive in the presence of a careless and ungrateful people; and his ashes were cast into the Tyber, lest the heretics should collect and worship the relics of their master". The clergy triumphed in his death: with his ashes, his sect was dispersed; his memory still lived in the minds of the Romans. From his school they had probably derived a new article of faith, that the metropolis of the Catholic church is exempt from the penalties of excommunication and interdict. Their bishops might argue, that the supreme

His execution.  
A. D. 1155.

jurisdiction, which they exercised over kings and nations, more specially embraced the city and diocese of the prince of the apostles. But they preached to the winds, and the same principle that weakened the effect, must temper the abuse, of the thunders of the Vatican.

The love of ancient freedom has encouraged a belief, that as early as the tenth century, in their first struggles against the Saxon Othos, the commonwealth was vindicated and restored by the senate and people of Rome; that two consuls were annually elected among the nobles; and that ten or twelve plebeian magistrates revived the name and office of the tribunes of the commons<sup>10</sup>. But this venerable structure disappears before the light of criticism. In the darkness of the middle ages, the appellations of senators, of consuls, of the sons of consuls, may sometimes be discovered<sup>11</sup>. They were bestowed by the emperors, or assumed by the most powerful citizens, to denote their rank, their honours<sup>12</sup>, and perhaps the claim of a pure and patrician descent: but they float on the surface, without a series or a substance, the titles of men, not the orders of government<sup>13</sup>; and it is only from the year of Christ one thousand one hundred and forty-four, that the establishment of the senate is dated, as a glorious æra, in the acts of the city. A new constitution was hastily framed by private ambition or popular enthusiasm; nor could Rome, in the twelfth century, produce an antiquary to explain, or a legislator to restore,

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Restoration  
of the senate,  
A. D. 1144.

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CHAPTER. the harmony and proportions of the ancient  
LXIX. model. The assembly of a free, of an armed, people, will ever speak in loud and weighty acclamations. But the regular distribution of the thirty-five tribes, the nice balance of the wealth and numbers of the centuries, the debates of the adverse orators, and the slow operation of votes and ballots, could not easily be adopted by a blind multitude, ignorant of the arts, and insensible of the benefits, of legal government. It was proposed by Arnold to revive and discriminate the equestrian order; but what could be the motive or measure of such distinction? The pecuniary qualification of the knights must have been reduced to the poverty of the times: those times no longer required their civil functions of judges and farmers of the revenue; and their primitive duty, their military service on horseback, was more nobly supplied by feudal tenures and the spirit of chivalry. The jurisprudence of the republic was useless and unknown: the nations and families of Italy who lived under the Roman and Barbaric laws were insensibly mingled in a common mass; and some faint tradition, some imperfect fragments, preserved the memory of the Code and Pandects of Justinian. With their liberty the Romans might doubtless have restored the appellation and office of consuls; had they not disdained a title so promiscuously adopted in the Italian cities, that it has finally settled on the humble station of the agents of commerce in a foreign land. But the rights of the tribunes, the formidable word

that arrested the public counsels, suppose or must produce a legitimate democracy. The old patri-  
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 cians were the subjects, the modern barons the tyrants, of the state; nor would the enemies of peace and order, who insulted the vicar of Christ, have long respected the unarmed sanctity of a plebeian magistrate."

In the revolution of the twelfth century, which The Capitol.  
 gave a new existence and æra to Rome, we may observe the real and important events that marked or confirmed her political independence. I. The Capitoline hill, one of her seven eminences", is about four hundred yards in length, and two hundred in breadth. A flight of an hundred steps led to the summit of the Tarpeian rock; and far steeper was the ascent before the declivities had been smoothed and the precipices filled by the ruins of fallen edifices. From the earliest ages, the Capitol had been used as a temple in peace, a fortress in war: after the loss of the city, it maintained a siege against the victorious Gauls; and the sanctuary of empire was occupied, assaulted, and burnt, in the civil wars of Vitellius and Vespasian". The temples of Jupiter and his kindred deities had crumbled into dust; the place was supplied by monasteries and houses, the solid walls, the long and shelf of time. It were decayed or ruined by, an act of freedom, was the first act of the R though not the beauty, to restore the strength to fortify the seat of their arms of the Capitol, and as often as they ascended the  
 and com-  
 G 3

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The coin.

hill, the coldest minds must have glowed with the remembrance of their ancestors. II. The first Cæsars had been invested with the exclusive coinage of the gold and silver; to the senate they abandoned the baser metal of bronze or copper": the emblems and legends were inscribed on a more ample field by the genius of flattery; and the prince was relieved from the care of celebrating his own virtues. The successors of Diocletian despised even the flattery of the senate: their royal officers at Rome, and in the provinces, assumed the sole direction of the mint; and the same prerogative was inherited by the Gothic kings of Italy, and the long series of the Greek, the French, and the German dynasties. After an abdication of eight hundred years, the Roman senate asserted this honourable and lucrative privilege; which was tacitly renounced by the popes, from Paschal the second to the establishment of their residence beyond the Alps. Some of these republican coins of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, are shewn in the cabinets of the curious. On one of these, a gold medal, Christ is depicted holding in his left hand a book with this inscription: "THE VOW OF THE ROMAN SENATE TO THE PEOPLE: ROME THE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD." On the reverse, St. Peter delivering a banner to a kneeling senator in his cap and gown, with the name and arms of his family impressed on a shield". III. As the empire, the præfect of the city had declined, a municipal officer; yet he still exercised in the appeal

The præfect  
of the city.

the civil and criminal jurisdiction; and a drawn sword, which he received from the successors of Otho, was the mode of his investiture and the emblem of his functions". The dignity was confined to the noble families of Rome: the choice of the people was ratified by the pope; but a triple oath of fidelity must have often embarrassed the præfect in the conflict of adverse duties". A servant, in whom they possessed but a third share, was dismissed by the independent Romans: in his place they elected a patrician; but this title, which Charlemagne had not disdained, was too lofty for a citizen or a subject; and, after the first fervour of rebellion, they consented without reluctance to the restoration of the præfect. About fifty years after this event, Innocent the third, the most ambitious, or at least the most fortunate, of the pontiffs, delivered the Romans and himself from this badge of foreign dominion: he invested the præfect with a banner instead of a sword, and absolved him from all dependence of oaths or service to the German emperors". In his place an ecclesiastic, a present or future cardinal, was named by the pope to the civil government of Rome; but his jurisdiction has been reduced to a narrow compass; and in the days of freedom, the right or exercise was derived from the senate and people. IV. After the revival of the senate", the conscript fathers (if I may use the expression) were invested with the legislative and executive power; but their views seldom reached beyond the present day; and that day was most frequently

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A. D.  
1158—1216.

Number and  
choice of the  
senate.

**C H A P. LXIX.** disturbed by violence and tumult. In its utmost plenitude, the order or assembly consisted of fifty-six senators", the most eminent of whom were distinguished by the title of counsellors; they were nominated, perhaps annually, by the people; and a previous choice of their electors, ten persons in each region or parish, might afford a basis for a free and permanent constitution. The popes, who in this tempest submitted rather to bend than to break, confirmed by treaty the establishment and privileges of the senate, and expected from time, peace, and religion, the restoration of their government. The motives of public and private interest might sometimes draw from the Romans an occasional and temporary sacrifice of their claims; and they renewed their oath of allegiance to the successor of St. Peter and Constantine, the lawful head of the church and the republic".

The office of  
senator.

The union and vigour of a public council was dissolved in a lawless city; and the Romans soon adopted a more strong and simple mode of administration. They condensed the name and authority of the senate in a single magistrate, or two colleagues; and as they were changed at the end of a year, or of six months, the greatness of the trust was compensated by the shortness of the term. But in this transient reign, the senators of Rome indulged their avarice and ambition: their justice was perverted by the interest of their family and faction: and as they punished only their enemies, they were obeyed only by their

adherents. Anarchy, no longer tempered by the pastoral care of their bishop, admonished the Romans that they were incapable of governing themselves; and they sought abroad those blessings which they were hopeless of finding at home. In the same age, and from the same motives, most of the Italian republics were prompted to embrace a measure, which, however strange it may seem, was adapted to their situation, and productive of the most salutary effects \*. They chose, in some foreign but friendly city, an impartial magistrate of noble birth and unblemished character, a soldier and a statesman, recommended by the voice of fame and his country, to whom they delegated for a time the supreme administration of peace and war. The compact between the governor and the governed was sealed with oaths and subscriptions; and the duration of his power, the measure of his stipend, the nature of their mutual obligations, were defined with scrupulous precision. They swore to obey him as their lawful superior: he pledged his faith to unite the indifference of a stranger with the zeal of a patriot. At his choice, four or six knights and civilians, his assessors in arms and justice, attended the *Podestà* \*\*, who maintained at his own expence a decent retinue of servants and horses: his wife, his son, his brother, who might bias the affections of the judge, were left behind; during the exercise of his office he was not permitted to purchase land, to contract an alliance, or even to accept an invitation in the house of a citizen; nor could he honourably depart

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**C H A P.** till he had satisfied the complaints that might be  
**LXIX.** urged against his government.

**Brancaleone** It was thus, about the middle of the thirteenth  
**A. D.** century, that the Romans called from Bologna the  
**1252—1258.** senator Brancaleone \*\*, whose fame and merit have been rescued from oblivion by the pen of an English historian. A just anxiety for his reputation, a clear foresight of the difficulties of the task, had engaged him to refuse the honour of their choice: the statutes of Rome were suspended, and his office prolonged to the term of three years. By the guilty and licentious he was accused as cruel; by the clergy he was suspected as partial; but the friends of peace and order applauded the firm and upright magistrate by whom those blessings were restored. No criminals were so powerful as to brave, so obscure as to elude, the justice of the senator. By his sentence two nobles of the Annibaldi family were executed on a gibbet; and he inexorably demolished, in the city and neighbourhood, one hundred and forty towers, the strong shelters of rapine and mischief. The bishop, as a simple bishop, was compelled to reside in his diocese; and the standard of Brancaleone was displayed in the field with terror and effect. His services were repaid by the ingratitude of a people unworthy of the happiness which they enjoyed. By the public robbers, whom he had provoked for their sake, the Romans were excited to depose and imprison their benefactor; nor would his life have been spared, if Bologna had not possessed a pledge for his safety. Before his departure, the prudent senator had required the

exchange of thirty hostages of the noblest families of Rome: on the news of his danger, and at the prayer of his wife, they were more strictly guarded; and Bologna, in the cause of honour, sustained the thunders of a papal interdict. This generous resistance allowed the Romans to compare the present with the past; and Brancalione was conducted from the prison to the Capitol amidst the acclamations of a repentant people. The remainder of his government was firm and fortunate; and as soon as envy was appeased by death, his head, enclosed in a precious vase, was deposited on a lofty column of marble".

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The impotence of reason and virtue recommended in Italy a more effectual choice: instead of a private citizen, to whom they yielded a voluntary and precarious obedience, the Romans elected for their senator some prince of independent power, who could defend them from their enemies and themselves. Charles of Anjou and Provence, the most ambitious and warlike monarch of the age, accepted at the same time the kingdom of Naples from the pope, and the office of senator from the Roman people". As he passed through the city, in his road to victory, he received their oath of allegiance, lodged in the Lateran palace, and smoothed in a short visit the harsh features of his despotic character. Yet even Charles was exposed to the inconstancy of the people, who saluted with the same acclamations the passage of his rival, the unfortunate Conradin; and a powerful avenger, who reigned in the Capitol, alarmed

Charles of  
Anjou,  
A. D.  
1256—1278.

**C H A P.** the fears and jealousy of the popes. The absolute term of his life was superseded by a renewal every third year; and the enmity of Nicholas the third obliged the Sicilian king to abdicate the government of Rome. In his bull, a perpetual law, the imperious pontiff asserts the truth, validity, and use, of the donation of Constantine, not less essential to the peace of the city than to the independence of the church; establishes the annual election of the senator; and formally disqualifies all emperors, kings, princes, and persons of an eminent and conspicuous rank ". This prohibitory clause was repealed in his own behalf by Martin the fourth, who humbly solicited the suffrage of the Romans. In the presence, and by the authority, of the people, two electors conferred, not on the pope, but on the noble and faithful Martin, the dignity of senator, and the supreme administration of the republic ", to hold during his natural life, and to exercise at pleasure by himself or his deputies. About fifty years afterwards, the same title was granted to the emperor Lewis of Bavaria; and the liberty of Rome was acknowledged by her two sovereigns, who accepted a municipal office in the government of their own metropolis.

**Pope Martin IV.**  
**A. D. 1281.**

**The emperor Lewis of Bavaria.**  
**A. D. 1328.**

**Addressees of Rome to the emperors.**

**Conrad III.**  
**A. D. 1144.**

In the first moments of rebellion, when Arnold of Brescia had inflamed their minds against the church, the Romans artfully laboured to conciliate the favour of the empire, and to recommend their merit and services in the cause of Cæsar. The style of their ambassadors to Conrad the third

and Frederic the first, is a mixture of flattery and pride, the tradition and the ignorance of their own history ". After some complaint of his silence and neglect, they exhort the former of these princes to pass the Alps, and assume from their hands the Imperial crown. " We beseech " your majesty, not to disdain the humility of " your sons and vassals, not to listen to the " accusations of our common enemies; who calumniate the senate as hostile to your throne, " who sow the seeds of discord, that they may " reap the harvest of destruction. The pope and " the *Sicilian* are united in an impious league to " oppose *our* liberty and *your* coronation. With " the blessing of God, our zeal and courage has hitherto defeated their attempts. Of their powerful and factious adherents, more especially the Frangipani, we have taken by assault the houses and turrets: some of these are occupied by our troops, and some are levelled with the ground. The Milvian bridge, which they had broken, is restored and fortified for your safe passage; and your army may enter the city without being annoyed from the castle of St. Angelo. All that we have done, and all that we design, is for your honour and service, in the loyal hope, that you will speedily appear in person, to vindicate those rights which have been invaded by the clergy, to revive the dignity of the empire, and to surpass the fame and glory of your predecessors. May you fix *your* residence in Rome, the capital of the

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**C H A P. LXIX.** " world; give laws to Italy, and the Teutonic kingdom; and imitate the example of Constantine and Justinian ", who by the vigour of the senate and people obtained the sceptre of the earth ". But these splendid and fallacious wishes were not cherished by Conrad the Franconian, whose eyes were fixed on the Holy Land, and who died without visiting Rome soon after his return from the Holy Land.

Frederic I.  
A. D. 1155.

His nephew and successor Frederic Barbarossa, was more ambitious of the Imperial crown; nor had any of the successors of Otho acquired such absolute sway over the kingdom of Italy. Surrounded by his ecclesiastical and secular princes, he gave audience in his camp at Sutri to the ambassadors of Rome, who thus addressed him in a free and florid oration: " Incline your ear to the queen of cities; approach with a peaceful and friendly mind the precincts of Rome, which has cast away the yoke of the clergy, and is impatient to crown her legitimate emperor. Under your auspicious influence, may the primitive times be restored. Assert the prerogatives of the eternal city, and reduce under her monarchy, the insolence of the world. You are not ignorant, that, in former ages, by the wisdom of the senate, by the valour and discipline of the equestrian order, she extended her victorious arms to the East and West, beyond the Alps, and over the islands of the ocean. By our sins, in the absence of our princes, the noble institution of the senate has

“ sunk in oblivion : and with our prudence, our C H A P.  
 “ strength has likewise decreased. We have LXIX.  
 “ revived the senate, and the equestrian order ;  
 “ the counsels of the one, the arms of the other,  
 “ will be devoted to your person and the service  
 “ of the empire. Do you not hear the language  
 “ of the Roman matron ? You were a guest, I  
 “ have adopted you as a citizen ; a Transalpine  
 “ stranger, I have elected you for my sovereign ” ;  
 “ and given you myself, and all that is mine.  
 “ Your first and most sacred duty, is to swear  
 “ and subscribe, that you will shed your blood  
 “ for the republic ; that you will maintain in  
 “ peace and justice, the laws of the city and  
 “ charters of your predecessors ; and that you  
 “ will reward with five thousand pounds of silver  
 “ the faithful senators who shall proclaim your  
 “ titles in the Capitol. With the name, assume  
 “ the character, of Augustus.” The flowers of  
 Latin rhetoric were not yet exhausted ; but  
 Frederic, impatient of their vanity, interrupted  
 the orators in the high tone of royalty and  
 conquest. “ Famous indeed have been the fortitude  
 “ and wisdom of the ancient Romans : but your  
 “ speech is not seasoned with wisdom, and I  
 “ could wish that fortitude were conspicuous in  
 “ your actions. Like all sublunary things, Rome  
 “ has felt the vicissitudes of time and fortune.  
 “ Your noblest families were translated to the  
 “ East, to the royal city of Constantine ; and the  
 “ remains of your strength and freedom have

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C H A P. " long since been exhausted by the Greeks and  
LXIX. " Franks. Are you desirous of beholding the  
" ancient glory of Rome, the gravity of the  
" senate, the spirit of the knights, the discipline  
" of the camp, the valour of the legions? you  
" will find them in the German republic. It is  
" not empire, naked and alone, the ornaments  
" and virtues of empire have likewise migrated  
" beyond the Alps to a more deserving people ":  
" they will be employed in your defence, but  
" they claim your obedience. You pretend that  
" myself or my predecessors have been invited  
" by the Romans: you mistake the word, they  
" were not invited; they were implored. From  
" its foreign and domestic tyrants, the city was  
" rescued by Charlemagne and Otho, whose ashes  
" repose in our country: and their dominion was  
" the price of your deliverance. Under that  
" dominion your ancestors lived and died. I  
" claim by the right of inheritance and possession,  
" and who shall dare to extort you from my  
" hands? Is the hand of the Franks " and Ger-  
" mans enfeebled by age? Am I vanquished?  
" Am I a captive? Am I not encompassed with  
" the banners of a potent and invincible army?  
" You impose conditions on your master; you  
" require oaths: if the conditions are just, an  
" oath is superfluous; if unjust, it is criminal.  
" Can you doubt my equity? It is extended to  
" the meanest of my subjects. Will not my  
" sword be unsheathed in the defence of the  
" Capitol?

“ Capitol ? by that sword the northern kingdom C H A P.  
 “ of Denmark has been restored to the Roman LXIX.  
 “ empire. You prescribe the measure and the  
 “ objects of my bounty , which flows in a  
 “ copious , but a voluntary stream. All will be  
 “ given to patient merit ; all will be denied to  
 “ rude importunity ” . ” Neither the emperor nor  
 the senate could maintain these lofty pretensions  
 of dominion and liberty. United with the pope ;  
 and suspicious of the Romans, Frederic continued  
 his march to the Vatican : his coronation was  
 disturbed by a fall from the Capitol ; and if the  
 numbers and valour of the Germans prevailed in  
 the bloody conflict, he could not safely encamp  
 in the presence of a city of which he styled  
 himself the sovereign. About twelve years after-  
 wards, he besieged Rome, to seat an antipope  
 in the chair of St. Peter ; and twelve Pisan galleys  
 were introduced into the Tyber : but the senate  
 and people were saved by the arts of negotiation  
 and the progress of disease ; nor did Frederic or  
 his successors reiterate the hostile attempt. Their  
 laborious reigns were exercised by the popes, the  
 crusades , and the independence of Lombardy  
 and Germany ; they courted the alliance of the  
 Romans ; and Frederic the second offered in the  
 Capitol the great standard, the *Caroccio* of  
 Milan “. After the extinction of the house of  
 Swabia, they were banished beyond the Alps ;  
 and their last coronations betrayed the impotence  
 and poverty of the Teutonic Cæsars “.



## C H A P.

## LXIX.

Wars of the  
Romans  
against the  
neighbour-  
ing cities.

Under the reign of Adrian, when the empire extended from the Euphrates to the ocean, from mount Atlas to the Grampian hills, a fanciful historian "amused the Romans with the picture of their infant wars. "There was a time," says Florus, "when Tibur and Præneſte, our summer retreats, were the objects of hostile vows in the Capitol, when we dreaded the shades of the Arician groves, when we could triumph without a blush over the nameless villages of the Sabines and Latins, and even Corioli could afford a title not unworthy of a victorious general." The pride of his contemporaries was gratified by the contrast of the past and the present: they would have been humbled by the prospect of futurity; by the prediction, that after a thousand years, Rome, despoiled of empire and contracted to her primæval limits, would renew the same hostilities, on the same ground which was then decorated with her villas and gardens. The adjacent territory on either side of the Tyber was always claimed, and sometimes possessed, as the patrimony of St. Peter; but the barons assumed a lawless independence, and the cities too faithfully copied the revolt and discord of the metropolis. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Romans incessantly laboured to reduce or destroy the contumacious vassals of the church and senate; and if their headstrong and selfish ambition was moderated by the pope, he often encouraged their zeal by the alliance of his spiritual arms. Their warfare was that of the

first consuls and dictators, who were taken from the plough. They assembled in arms at the foot of the Capitol; sallied from the gates, plundered or burnt the harvests of their neighbours, engaged in tumultuary conflict, and returned home after an expedition of fifteen or twenty days. Their sieges were tedious and unskilful: in the use of victory, they indulged the meaner passions of jealousy and revenge; and instead of adopting the valour, they trampled on the misfortunes, of their adversaries. The captives, in their shirts, with a rope round their necks, solicited their pardon: the fortifications and even the buildings of the rival cities were demolished, and the inhabitants were scattered in the adjacent villages. It was thus that the seats of the cardinal bishops, Porto, Ostia, Albanum, Tusculum, Præneste, and Tibur or Tivoli, were successively overthrown by the ferocious hostility of the Romans. Of these, Porto and Ostia, the two keys of the Tyber, are still vacant and desolate: the marshy and unwholesome banks are peopled with herds of buffaloes, and the river is lost to every purpose of navigation and trade. The hills which afford a shady retirement from the autumnal heats, have again smiled with the blessings of peace: Fregati has arisen near the ruins of Tusculum: Tibur or Tivoli has resumed the honours of a city, and the meaner towns of Albano and Palestrina are decorated with the villas of the cardinals and princes of Rome. In the work of destruction, the ambition of the Romans

**C H A P.** was often checked and repulsed by the neighbouring cities and their allies : in the first siege of Tibur, they were driven from their camp; and the battles of Tusculum " and Viterbo " might be compared in their relative state to the memorable fields of Thrasymene and Cannæ. In the first of these petty wars, thirty thousand Romans were overthrown by a thousand German horse, whom Frederic Barbarossa had detached to the relief of Tusculum; and if we number the slain at three, the prisoners at two, thousand, we shall embrace the most authentic and moderate account. Sixty-eight years afterward they marched against Viterbo in the ecclesiastical state with the whole force of the city; by a rare coalition, the Teutonic eagle was blended, in the adverse banners, with the keys of St. Peter; and the pope's auxiliaries were commanded by a count of Tholouse and a bishop of Winchester. The Romans were discomfited with shame and slaughter; but the English prelate must have indulged the vanity of a pilgrim, if he multiplied their numbers to one hundred, and their loss in the field to thirty, thousand men. Had the policy of the senate and the discipline of the legions been restored with the Capitol, the divided condition of Italy would have offered the fairest opportunity of a second conquest. But in arms, the modern Romans were not *above*, and in arts, they were far *below*, the common level of the neighbouring republics. Nor was their warlike spirit of any long continuance; after some irregular sallies,

**LXIX.**

Battle of  
Tusculum,  
A. D. 1167.

Battle of  
Viterbo,  
A. D. 1234.

they subsided in the national apathy, in the neglect of military institutions, and in the disgraceful and dangerous use of foreign mercenaries.

Ambition is a weed of quick and early vegetation in the vineyard of Christ. Under the first Christian princes, the chair of St. Peter was disputed by the votes, the venality, the violence, of a popular election : the sanctuaries of Rome were polluted with blood ; and, from the third to the twelfth century, the church was distracted by the mischief of frequent schisms. As long as the final appeal was determined by the civil magistrate, these mischiefs were transient and local: the merits were tried by equity or favour, nor could the unsuccessful competitor long disturb the triumph of his rival. But after the emperors had been divested of their prerogatives, after a maxim had been established, that the vicar of Christ is amenable to no earthly tribunal, each vacancy of the holy see might involve Christendom in controversy and war. The claims of the cardinals and inferior clergy, of the nobles and people, were vague and litigious: the freedom of choice was over-ruled by the tumults of a city that no longer owned or obeyed a superior. On the decease of a pope, two factions proceeded in different churches to a double election: the number and weight of votes, the priority of time, the merit of the candidates, might balance each other: the most respectable of the clergy were divided; and the distant princes, who bowed before the spiritual throne, could not distinguish the spurious,

C H A P.

LXIX.

The election  
of the popes.

C H A P.  
LXIX.

Right of the  
cardinals  
established  
by Alexan-  
der III.  
A. D. 1179.

from the legitimate, idol. The emperors were often the authors of the schism, from the political motive of opposing a friendly to an hostile pontiff; and each of the competitors was reduced to suffer the insults of his enemies, who were not awed by conscience; and to purchase the support of his adherents, who were instigated by avarice or ambition. A peaceful and perpetual succession was ascertained by Alexander the third<sup>o</sup>, who finally abolished the tumultuary votes of the clergy and people, and defined the right of election in the sole college of cardinals<sup>o</sup>. The three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons, were assimilated to each other by this important privilege: the parochial clergy of Rome obtained the first rank in the hierarchy; they were indifferently chosen among the nations of Christendom; and the possession of the richest benefices, of the most important bishoprics, was not incompatible with their title and office. The senators of the Catholic church, the coadjutors and legates of the supreme pontiff, were robed in purple, the symbol of martyrdom or royalty; they claimed a proud equality with kings; and their dignity was enhanced by the smallness of their number, which, till the reign of Leo the tenth, seldom exceeded twenty, or twenty-five, persons. By this wise regulation, all doubt and scandal were removed, and the root of schism was so effectually destroyed, that in a period of six hundred years a double choice has only once divided the unity of the sacred college. But as the concurrence of two

thirds of the votes had been made necessary, the election was often delayed by the private interest and passions of the cardinals; and while they prolonged their independent reign, the Christian world was left destitute of an head. A vacancy of almost three years had preceded the elevation of Gregory the tenth, who resolved to prevent the future abuse; and his bull, after some opposition, has been consecrated in the code of the canon law<sup>70</sup>. Nine days are allowed for the obsequies of the deceased pope, and the arrival of the absent cardinals: on the tenth, they are imprisoned, each with one domestic, in a common apartment or *conclave*, without any separation of walls or curtains; a small window is reserved for the introduction of necessities; but the door is locked on both sides, and guarded by the magistrates of the city, to exclude them from all correspondence with the world. If the election be not consummated in three days, the luxury of their table is contracted to a single dish at dinner and supper; and after the eighth day, they are reduced to a scanty allowance of bread, water, and wine. During the vacancy of the holy see, the cardinals are prohibited from touching the revenues, or assuming, unless in some rare emergency, the government, of the church: all agreements and promises among the electors are formally annulled; and their integrity is fortified by their solemn oath and the prayers of the Catholics. Some articles of inconvenient or superfluous rigour have been gradually relaxed,

CHAP.  
LXIX.

Institution  
of the con-  
clave by  
Gregory X.  
A. D. 1274.

C H A P. but the principle of confinement is vigorous and  
 LXIX. entire: they are still urged, by the personal motives  
 of health and freedom, to accelerate the moment  
 of their deliverance; and the improvement of ballot  
 or secret votes has wrapt the struggles of the  
 conclave "in the silky veil of charity and politeness". By these institutions, the Romans were  
 excluded from the election of their prince and  
 bishop; and in the fever of wild and precarious  
 liberty, they seemed insensible of the loss of this  
 inestimable privilege. The emperor Lewis of  
 A. D. 1328. Bavaria revived the example of the great Otho.  
 After some negotiation with the magistrates, the  
 Roman people was assembled "in the square  
 before St. Peter's; the pope of Avignon, John  
 the twenty-second, was deposed; the choice of  
 his successor was ratified by their consent and  
 applause. They freely voted for a new law,  
 that their bishop should never be absent more  
 than three months in the year, and two days  
 journey from the city; and that if he neglected  
 to return on the third summons, the public servant  
 should be degraded and dismissed". But  
 Lewis forgot his own debility and the prejudices  
 of the times: beyond the precincts of a German  
 camp, his useless phantom was rejected; the  
 Romans despised their own workmanship; the  
 antipope implored the mercy of his lawful sovereign"; and the exclusive right of the cardinals  
 was more firmly established by this unseasonable  
 attack.

Had the election been always held in the Vatican, the rights of the senate and people would not have been violated with impunity. But the Romans forgot, and were forgotten, in the absence of the successors of Gregory the seventh, who did not keep as a divine precept their ordinary residence in the city and diocese. The care of that diocese was less important than the government of the universal church; nor could the popes delight in a city in which their authority was always opposed and their person was often endangered. From the persecution of the emperors, and the wars of Italy, they escaped beyond the Alps into the hospitable bosom of France; from the tumults of Rome they prudently withdrew to live and die in the more tranquil stations of Anagni, Perugia, Viterbo, and the adjacent cities. When the flock was offended or impoverished by the absence of the shepherd, they were recalled by a stern admonition, that St. Peter had fixed his chair, not in an obscure village, but in the capital of the world; by a ferocious menace that the Romans would march in arms to destroy the place and people that should dare to afford them a retreat. They returned with timorous obedience; and were saluted with the account of an heavy debt, of all the losses which their desertion had occasioned, the hire of lodgings, the sale of provisions, and the various expences of servants and strangers who attended the court. After a short interval of peace, and perhaps of authority, they were again banished

C H A P.  
 LXIX.  
 Absence of  
 the popes  
 from Rome.



## 106 THE DECLINE AND FALL

CHAP. by new tumults, and again summoned by the  
 LXIX. imperious or respectful invitation of the senate. In  
 these occasional retreats, the exiles and fugitives of  
 the Vatican were seldom long; or far, distant from the  
 metropolis; but in the beginning of the fourteenth  
 century the apostolic throne was transported, as  
 it might seem for ever, from the Tyber to the  
 Rhone; and the cause of the transmigration may  
 be deduced from the furious contest between  
 Boni- face VIII.  
 A. D.  
 1294—1303. Boniface the eighth and the king of France ”.

The spiritual arms of excommunication and interdict were repulsed by the union of the three estates, and the privileges of the Gallican church; but the pope was not armed against the carnal weapons which Philip the Fair had courage to employ. As the pope resided at Anagni, without the suspicion of danger, his palace and person were assaulted by three hundred horse, who had been secretly levied by William of Nogaret, a French minister, and Sciarra Colonna, of a noble but hostile family of Rome. The cardinals fled; the inhabitants of Anagni were seduced from their allegiance and gratitude; but the dauntless Boniface, unarmed and alone, seated himself in his chair, and awaited, like the conscript fathers of old, the swords of the Gauls. Nogaret, a foreign adversary, was content to execute the orders of his master: by the domestic enmity of Colonna, he was insulted with words and blows; and during a confinement of three days his life was threatened by the hardships which they inflicted on the obstinacy which they provoked. Their

strange delay gave time and courage to the adherents of the church, who rescued him from sacrilegious violence; but his imperious soul was wounded in a vital part; and Boniface expired at Rome in a frenzy of rage and revenge. His memory is stained with the glaring vices of avarice and pride; nor has the courage of a martyr promoted this ecclesiastical champion to the honours of a saint; a magnanimous sinner (say the chronicles of the times), who entered like a fox, reigned like a lion, and died like a dog. He was succeeded by Benedict the eleventh, the mildest of mankind. Yet he excommunicated the impious emissaries of Philip, and devoted the city and people of Anagni by a tremendous curse, whose effects are still visible to the eyes of superstition.<sup>78</sup>

After his decease, the tedious and equal suspense of the conclave was fixed by the dexterity of the French faction. A specious offer was made and accepted, that, in the term of forty days, they would elect one of the three candidates who should be named by their opponents. The archbishop of Bourdeaux, a furious enemy of his king and country, was the first on the list; but his ambition was known; and his conscience obeyed the calls of fortune and the commands of a benefactor, who had been informed by a swift messenger that the choice of a pope was now in his hands. The terms were regulated in a private interview; and with such speed and secrecy was the business transacted, that the

Translation  
of the holy  
see to  
Avignon,  
A. D. 1302.

## 108 THE DECLINE AND FALL

C H A P. unanimous conclave applauded the elevation of  
 LXIX. Clement the fifth". The cardinals of both parties were soon astonished by a summons to attend him beyond the Alps; from whence, as they soon discovered, they must never hope to return. He was engaged, by promise and affection, to prefer the residence of France; and, after dragging his court through Poitou and Gascogny, and devouring, by his expence, the cities and convents on the road, he finally reposed at Avignon", which flourished above seventy years" the seat of the Roman pontiff and the metropolis of Christendom. By land, by sea, by the Rhone, the position of Avignon was on all sides accessible: the southern provinces of France do not yield to Italy itself; new palaces arose for the accommodation of the pope and cardinals; and the arts of luxury were soon attracted by the treasures of the church. They were already possessed of the adjacent territory, the Venaissin county", a populous and fertile spot; and the sovereignty of Avignon was afterwards purchased from the youth and distress of Jane, the first queen of Naples and countess of Provence, for the inadequate price of fourscore thousand florins". Under the shadow of the French monarchy, amidst an obedient people, the popes enjoyed an honourable and tranquil state, to which they long had been strangers: but Italy deplored their absence; and Rome, in solitude and poverty, might repent of the ungovernable freedom which had driven from the Vatican the successor of St.

Peter. Her repentance was tardy and fruitless: after the death of the old members, the sacred college was filled with French cardinals \*\*, who beheld Rome and Italy with abhorrence and contempt, and perpetuated a series of national, and even provincial, popes, attached by the most indissoluble ties to their native country.

C H A P.

LXIX.

The progress of industry had produced and enriched the Italian republics: the æra of their liberty is the most flourishing period of population and agriculture, of manufactures and commerce; and their mechanic labours were gradually refined into the arts of elegance and genius. But the position of Rome was less favourable, the territory less fruitful; the character of the inhabitants was debased by indolence and elated by pride; and they fondly conceived that the tribute of subjects must for ever nourish the metropolis of the church and empire. This prejudice was encouraged in some degree by the resort of pilgrims to the shrines of the apostles; and the last legacy of the popes, the institution of the HOLY YEAR \*\*, was not less beneficial to the people than to the clergy. Since the loss of Palestine, the gift of plenary indulgences, which had been applied to the crusades, remained without an object; and the most valuable treasure of the church was sequestered above eight years from public circulation. A new channel was opened by the diligence of Boniface the eighth, who reconciled the vices of ambition and avarice; and the pope had sufficient learning to recollect and

Institution of  
the jubilee,  
or holy year,  
A. D. 1300.

## 110 THE DECLINE AND FALL

**C H A P** revive the secular games, which were celebrated  
**LXIX.** in Rome at the conclusion of every century. To  
found without danger the depth of popular credu-  
lity, a sermon was seasonably pronounced, a  
report was artfully scattered, some aged witnesses  
were produced; and on the first of January of the  
year thirteen hundred, the church of St. Peter  
was crowded with the faithful, who demanded  
the *customary* indulgence of the holy time. The  
pontiff, who watched and irritated their devout  
impatience, was soon persuaded by ancient testi-  
mony of the justice of their claim; and he pro-  
claimed a plenary absolution to all Catholics  
who, in the course of that year, and at every  
similar period, should respectfully visit the apos-  
tolic churches of St. Peter and St. Paul. The  
welcome sound was propagated through Christen-  
dom; and at first from the nearest provinces of  
Italy, and at length from the remote kingdoms  
of Hungary and Britain, the highways were  
thronged with a swarm of pilgrims who sought  
to expiate their sins in a journey, however costly  
or laborious, which was exempt from the perils  
of military service. All exceptions of rank or  
sex, of age or infirmity, were forgotten in the  
common transport; and in the streets and churches  
many persons were trampled to death by the  
eagerness of devotion. The calculation of their  
numbers could not be easy nor accurate; and  
they have probably been magnified by a dextrous  
clergy, well apprized of the contagion of example:  
yet we are assured by a judicious historian, who

## OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE. III

assisted at the ceremony, that Rome was never replenished with less than two hundred thousand strangers; and another spectator has fixed at two millions the total concourse of the year. A trifling oblation from each individual would accumulate a royal treasure; and two priests stood night and day, with rakes in their hands, to collect, without counting, the heaps of gold and silver that were poured on the altar of St. Paul ". It was fortunately a season of peace and plenty; and if forage was scarce, if inns and lodgings were extravagantly dear, an inexhaustible supply of bread and wine, of meat and fish, was provided by the policy of Boniface and the venal hospitality of the Romans. From a city without trade or industry, all casual riches will speedily evaporate: but the avarice and envy of the next generation solicited Clement the sixth " to anticipate the distant period of the century. The gracious pontiff complied with their wishes; afforded Rome this poor consolation for his loss; and justified the change by the name and practice of the mosaic jubilee ". His summons was obeyed; and the number, zeal, and liberality, of the pilgrims did not yield to the primitive festival. But they encountered the triple scourge of war, pestilence, and famine: many wives and virgins were violated in the castles of Italy; and many strangers were pillaged or murdered by the savage Romans, no longer moderated by the presence of their bishop ". To the impatience of the popes we may ascribe the successive reduction to fifty, thirty-three, and

C H A P.  
LXIX.

The second  
jubilee,  
A. D. 1350.

## 112 THE DECLINE AND FALL

C H A P. twenty-five, years; although the second of these  
 LXIX. terms is commensurate with the life of Christ. The profusion of indulgences, the revolt of the Protestants, and the decline of superstition, have much diminished the value of the jubilee: yet even the nineteenth and last festival was a year of pleasure and profit to the Romans; and a philosophic smile will not disturb the triumph of the priest or the happiness of the people”.

The nobles  
 or barons of  
 Rome.

In the beginning of the eleventh century, Italy was exposed to the feudal tyranny alike oppressive to the sovereign and the people. The rights of human nature were vindicated by her numerous republics, who soon extended their liberty and dominion from the city to the adjacent country. The sword of the nobles was broken; their slaves were enfranchised; their castles were demolished; they assumed the habits of society and obedience; their ambition was confined to municipal honours, and in the proudest aristocracy of Venice or Genoa, each patrician was subject to the laws”. But the feeble and disorderly government of Rome was unequal to the task of curbing her rebellious sons; who scorned the authority of the magistrate within and without the walls. It was no longer a civil contention between the nobles and plebeians for the government of the state: the barons asserted in arms their personal independence; their palaces and castles were fortified against a siege; and their private quarrels were maintained by the numbers of their vassals and retainers. In origin and affection,

affection, they were aliens to their country": and a genuine Roman, could such have been produced, might have renounced these haughty strangers, who disdained the appellation of citizens, and proudly styled themselves the princes, of Rome". After a dark series of revolutions, all records of pedigree were lost; the distinction of surnames was abolished; the blood of the nations was mingled in a thousand channels; and the Goths and Lombards, the Greeks and Franks, the Germans and Normans, had obtained the fairest possessions by royal bounty, or the prerogative of valour. These examples might be readily presumed: but the elevation of an Hebrew race to the rank of senators and consuls, is an event without a parallel in the long captivity of these miserable exiles". In the time of Leo the ninth, a wealthy and learned Jew was converted to christianity; and honoured at his baptism with the name of his godfather, the reigning pope. The zeal and courage of Peter the son of Leo were signalized in the cause of Gregory the seventh, who entrusted his faithful adherent with the government of Adrian's mole, the tower of Crescentius, or, as it is now called, the castle of St. Angelo. Both the father and the son were the parents of a numerous progeny; their riches, the fruits of usury, were shared with the noblest families of the city; and so extensive was their alliance, that the grandson of the proselyte was exalted by the weight of his kindred to the throne of St. Peter. A majority of the

C H A P.

LXIX.

Family of  
Leo the Jew.



**C H A P.** clergy and people supported his cause; he reigned several years in the Vatican, and it is only the eloquence of St. Bernard, and the final triumph of Innocent the second, that has branded Anacletus with the epithet of antipope. After his defeat and death, the posterity of Leo is no longer conspicuous; and none will be found of the modern nobles ambitious of descending from a Jewish stock. It is not my design to enumerate the Roman families, which have failed at different periods, or those which are continued in different degrees of splendour to the present time". The old consular line of the *Frangipani* discover their name in the generous act of *breaking* or dividing bread in a time of famine; and such benevolence is more truly glorious than to have enclosed, with their allies the *Corfi*, a spacious quarter of the city in the chains of their fortifications: the *Savelli*, as it should seem a Sabine race, have maintained their original dignity; the obsoletè surname of the *Capizucchi* is inscribed on the coins of the first senators; the *Conti* preserve the honour, without the estate, of the counts of Signia; and the *Annibaldi* must have been very ignorant, or very modest, if they had not descended from the Carthaginian hero".

The Colonna,

But among, perhaps above, the peers and princes of the city, I distinguish the rival houses of COLONNA and URSINI, whose private story is an essential part of the annals of modern Rome. I. The name and arms of Colonna" have been

the theme of much doubtful etymology; nor have the orators and antiquarians overlooked either Trajan's pillar, or the columns of Hercules, or the pillar of Christ's flagellation, or the luminous column that guided the Israelites in the desert. Their first historical appearance in the year eleven hundred and four., attests the power and antiquity, while it explains the simple meaning, of the name. By the usurpation of Cavæ, the Colonna provoked the arms of Paschal the second; but they lawfully held in the Campagna of Rome, the hereditary fiefs of Zagarola and *Colonna*; and the latter of these towns was probably adorned with some lofty pillar, the relic of a villa or temple". They likewise possessed one moiety of the neighbouring city of Tusculum; a strong presumption of their descent from the counts of Tusculum, who in the tenth century were the tyrants of the apostolic see. According to their own and the public opinion, the primitive and remote source was derived from the banks of the Rhine"; and the sovereigns of Germany were not ashamed of a real or fabulous affinity with a noble race, which in the revolutions of seven hundred years has been often illustrated by merit, and always by fortune<sup>100</sup>. About the end of the thirteenth century, the most powerful branch was composed of an uncle and six brothers, all conspicuous in arms, or in the honours of the church. Of these, Peter was elected senator of Rome, introduced to the Capitol in a triumphant car, and hailed in

C H A P.

LXIX.

C H A P. some vain acclamations with the title of Cæsar; LXIX. while John and Stephen were declared marquiss of Ancona and count of Romagna, by Nicholas the fourth, a patron so partial to their family, that he has been delineated in satirical portraits, imprisoned as it were in a hollow pillar<sup>11</sup>. After his decease, their haughty behaviour provoked the displeasure of the most implacable of mankind. The two cardinals, the uncle and the nephew, denied the election of Boniface the eighth; and the Colonna were oppressed for a moment by his temporal and spiritual arms<sup>12</sup>. He proclaimed a crusade against his personal enemies; their estates were confiscated; their fortresses on either side of the Tyber were besieged by the troops of St. Peter and those of the rival nobles; and after the ruin of Palestrina or Præneste, their principal seat, the ground was marked with a ploughshare, the emblem of perpetual desolation. Degraded, banished, proscribed, the six brothers, in disguise and danger, wandered over Europe without renouncing the hope of deliverance and revenge. In this double hope, the French court was their surest asylum: they prompted and directed the enterprize of Philip; and I should praise their magnanimity, had they respected the misfortune and courage of the captive tyrant. His civil acts were annulled by the Roman people, who restored the honours and possessions of the Colonna; and some estimate may be formed of their wealth by their losses, of their losses by the damages of one hundred thousand gold florins

which were granted them against the accomplices and heirs of the deceased pope. All the spiritual censures and disqualifications were abolished<sup>101</sup> by his prudent successors; and the fortune of the house was more firmly established by this transient hurricane. The boldness of Sciarra Colonna was signalized in the captivity of Boniface; and long afterwards in the coronation of Lewis of Bavaria; and by the gratitude of the emperor, the pillar in their arms was encircled with a royal crown. But the first of the family in fame and merit was the elder Stephen, whom Petrarch loved and esteemed as an hero superior to his own times, and not unworthy of ancient Rome. Persecution and exile displayed to the nations his abilities in peace and war; in his distress, he was an object, not of pity, but of reverence; the aspect of danger provoked him to avow his name and country: and when he was asked, "where is now your fortress?" he laid his hand on his heart, and answered, "here." He supported with the same virtue the return of prosperity; and, till the ruin of his declining age, the ancestors, the character, and the children of Stephen Colonna, exalted his dignity in the Roman republic, and at the court of Avignon. II. The Urfini migrated from Spoleto<sup>102</sup>; the sons of Urfus, as they are styled in the twelfth century, from some eminent person who is only known as the father of their race. But they were soon distinguished among the nobles of Rome, by the number and bravery of their kinsmen, the strength

CHAP.  
LXIX.

and Urfini.

## 118 THE DECLINE AND FALL

**C H A P.** of their towers, the honours of the senate and  
**LXIX.** sacred college, and the elevation of two popes, Celestin the third and Nicholas the third, of their name and lineage<sup>111</sup>. Their riches may be accused as an early abuse of nepotism: the estates of St. Peter were alienated in their favour by the liberal Celestin<sup>112</sup>; and Nicholas was ambitious for their sake to solicit the alliance of monarchs; to found new kingdoms in Lombardy and Tuscany; and to invest them with the perpetual office of senators of Rome. All that has been observed of the greatness of the Colonna, will likewise redound to the glory of the Ursini, their constant and equal antagonists in the long hereditary feud, which distracted above two hundred and fifty years the ecclesiastical state. The jealousy of pre-eminence and power was the true ground of their quarrel; but as a specious badge of distinction, the Colonna embraced the name of Ghibelines and the party of the empire; the Ursini espoused the title of Guelphs and the cause of the church. The eagle and the keys were displayed in their adverse banners; and the two factions of Italy most furiously raged when the origin and nature of the dispute were long since forgotten<sup>113</sup>. After the retreat of the popes to Avignon, they disputed in arms the vacant republic: and the mischiefs of discord were perpetuated by the wretched compromise of electing each year two rival senators. By their private hostilities, the city and country were desolated, and the fluctuating balance inclined with their

Their hereditary feuds.

alternate success. But none of either family had fallen by the sword, till the most renowned champion of the Urfini was surprised and slain by the younger Stephen Colonna<sup>108</sup>. His triumph is stained with the reproach of violating the truce; their defeat was basely avenged by the assassination, before the church door, of an innocent boy and his two servants. Yet the victorious Colonna, with an annual colleague, was declared senator of Rome during the term of five years. And the muse of Petrarch inspired a wish, a hope, a prediction, that the generous youth, the son of his venerable hero, would restore Rome and Italy to their pristine glory; that his justice would extirpate the wolves and lions, the serpents and bears, who laboured to subvert the eternal basis of the marble COLUMN<sup>109</sup>.

C H A P.  
LXIX.

## C H A P. LXX.

*Character and Coronation of Petrarch. — Restoration of the Freedom and Government of Rome by the Tribune Rienzi, — His Virtues and Vices, his Expulsion and Death. — Return of the Popes from Avignon. — Great Schism of the West. — Re-union of the Latin Church. — Last Struggles of Roman Liberty. — Statutes of Rome. — Final Settlement of the Ecclesiastical State.*

C H A P.

LXX.

Petrarch,  
A. D. 1304,  
June 19 —  
A. D. 1374,  
July 19.

**I**N the apprehension of Modern times, Petrarch<sup>2</sup> is the Italian songster of Laura and Love. In the harmony of his Tuscan rhymes, Italy applauds, or rather adores, the father of her lyric poetry: and his verse, or at least his name, is repeated by the enthusiasm, or affectation, of amorous sensibility. Whatever may be the private taste of a stranger, his slight and superficial knowledge should humbly acquiesce in the judgment of a learned nation: yet I may hope or presume, that the Italians do not compare the tedious uniformity of sonnets and elegies, with the sublime compositions of their epic muse, the original wildness of Dante, the regular beauties of Tasso, and the boundless variety of the incomparable Ariosto. The merits of the lover, I am still less qualified

to appreciate: nor am I deeply interested in a metaphysical passion for a nymph so shadowy, that her existence has been questioned<sup>1</sup>; for a matron so prolific<sup>2</sup>, that she was delivered of eleven legitimate children<sup>3</sup>, while her amorous swain fished and sung at the fountain of Vaucluse<sup>4</sup>. But in the eyes of Petrarch, and those of his graver contemporaries, his love was a sin, and Italian verse a frivolous amusement. His Latin works of philosophy, poetry, and eloquence, established his serious reputation, which was soon diffused from Avignon over France and Italy: his friends and disciples were multiplied in every city; and if the ponderous volume of his writings<sup>5</sup> be now abandoned to a long repose, our gratitude must applaud the man, who by precept and example, revived the spirit and study of the Augustan age. From his earliest youth, Petrarch aspired to the poetic crown. The academical honours of the three faculties had introduced a royal degree of master or doctor in the art of poetry<sup>6</sup>, and the title of poet-laureat, which custom, rather than vanity, perpetuates in the English court<sup>7</sup>, was first invented by the Cæsars of Germany. In the musical games of antiquity, a prize was bestowed on the victor<sup>8</sup>: the belief that Virgil and Horace had been crowned in the Capitol, inflamed the emulation of a Latin bard<sup>9</sup>; and the laurel<sup>10</sup> was endeared to the lover by a verbal resemblance with the name of his mistress. The value of either object was enhanced by the difficulties of the pursuit; and if the virtue or

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C H A P. LXX. prudence of Laura was inexorable"; he enjoyed, and might boast of enjoying, the nymph of poetry. His vanity was not of the most delicate kind, since he applauds the success of his own labours; his name was popular; his friends were active; the open or secret opposition of envy and prejudice, was surmounted by the dexterity of patient merit. In the thirty-sixth year of his age, he was solicited to accept the object of his wishes: and on the same day, in the solitude of *Vaucluse*, he received a similar and solemn invitation from the senate of Rome and the university of Paris. The learning of a theological school, and the ignorance of a lawless city, were alike unqualified to bestow the ideal though immortal wreath which genius may obtain from the free applause of the public and of posterity: but the candidate dismissed this troublesome reflection, and, after some moments of complacency and suspense, preferred the summons of the metropolis of the world.

His poetic  
coronation at  
Rome,

A. D. 1341,  
April 8.

The ceremony of his coronation " was performed in the Capitol, by his friend and patron the supreme magistrate of the republic. Twelve patrician youths were arrayed in scarlet; six representatives of the most illustrious families, in green robes, with garlands of flowers, accompanied the procession; in the midst of the princes and nobles, the senator, count of Anguillara, a kinsman of the Colonna, assumed his throne; and at the voice of an herald, Petrarch arose. After discoursing on a text of Virgil, and thrice

repeating his vows for the prosperity of Rome, CHAP.  
LXX. he knelt before the throne and received from the senator a laurel crown, with a more precious declaration, "This is the reward of merit." The people shouted, "Long life to the Capitol and the poet!" A sonnet in praise of Rome was accepted as the effusion of genius and gratitude; and after the whole procession had visited the Vatican, the profane wreath was suspended before the shrine of St. Peter. In the act or diploma which was presented to Petrarch, the title and prerogatives of poet laureat are revived in the Capitol, after the lapse of thirteen hundred years; and he receives the perpetual privilege of wearing, at his choice, a crown of laurel, ivy, or myrtle, of assuming the poetic habit, and of teaching, disputing, interpreting, and composing, in all places whatsoever, and on all subjects of literature. The grant was ratified by the authority of the senate and people; and the character of citizen was the recompence of his affection for the Roman name. They did him honour, but they did him justice. In the familiar society of Cicero and Livy, he had imbibed the ideas of an ancient patriot; and his ardent fancy kindled every idea to a sentiment, and every sentiment to a passion. The aspect of the seven hills and their majestic ruins, confirmed these lively impressions; and he loved a country by whose liberal spirit he had been crowned and adopted. The poverty and debasement of Rome excited the indignation and pity of her grateful son: he dissimulated the faults

C H A P. of his fellow-citizens; applauded with partial fondness the last of their heroes and matrons; and in the remembrance of the past, in the hope of the future, was pleased to forget the miseries of the present time. Rome was still the lawful mistress of the world: the pope and the emperor, her bishop and general, had abdicated their station by an inglorious retreat to the Rhone and the Danube; but if she could resume her virtue, the republic might again vindicate her liberty and dominion. Amidst the indulgence of enthusiasm and eloquence", Petrarch, Italy, and Europe, were astonished by a revolution which realized for a moment his most splendid visions. The rise and fall of the tribune Rienzi will occupy the following pages": the subject is interesting, the materials are rich, and the glance of a patriot-bard" will sometimes vivify the copious, but simple, narrative of the Florentine", and more especially of the Roman" historian.

Birth, character, and patriotic designs of Rienzi.

In a quarter of the city which was inhabited only by mechanics and Jews, the marriage of an innkeeper and a washerwoman produced the future deliverer of Rome". From such parents Nicholas Rienzi Gabrini could inherit neither dignity nor fortune; and the gift of a liberal education, which they painfully bestowed, was the cause of his glory and untimely end. The study of history and eloquence, the writings of Cicero, Seneca, Livy, Cæsar, and Valerius Maximus, elevated above his equals and contemporaries the genius

of the young plebeian: he perused with indefatigable diligence the manuscripts and marbles of antiquity; loved to dispense his knowledge in familiar language; and was often provoked to exclaim, "Where are now these Romans? their virtue, their justice, their power? why was I not born in those happy times?" When the republic addressed to the throne of Avignon an embassy of the three orders, the spirit and eloquence of Rienzi recommended him to a place among the thirteen deputies of the commons. The orator had the honour of haranguing pope Clement the sixth, and the satisfaction of conversing with Petrarch, a congenial mind: but his aspiring hopes were chilled by disgrace and poverty; and the patriot was reduced to a single garment and the charity of the hospital. From this misery he was relieved by the sense of merit or the smile of favour; and the employment of apostolic notary afforded him a daily stipend of five gold florins, a more honourable and extensive connection, and the right of contrasting, both in words and actions, his own integrity with the vices of the state. The eloquence of Rienzi was prompt and persuasive: the multitude is always prone to envy and censure: he was stimulated by the loss of a brother and the impunity of the assassins; nor was it possible to excuse or exaggerate the public calamities. The blessings of peace and justice, for which civil society has been instituted, were banished from Rome: the jealous citizens, who might have endured every personal or

-C H A P. pecuniary injury, were most deeply wounded in  
 LXX. the dishonour of their wives and daughters<sup>22</sup>:  
 they were equally oppressed by the arrogance of  
 the nobles and the corruption of the magistrates;  
 and the abuse of arms or of laws was the only  
 circumstance that distinguished the lions, from  
 the dogs and serpents, of the Capitol. These  
 allegorical emblems were variously repeated in  
 the pictures which Rienzi exhibited in the streets  
 and churches; and while the spectators gazed  
 with curious wonder, the bold and ready orator  
 unfolded the meaning, applied the satire, inflamed  
 their passions, and announced a distant hope of  
 comfort and deliverance. The privileges of Rome,  
 her eternal sovereignty over her, princes and  
 provinces, was the theme of his public and private  
 discourse; and a monument of servitude became  
 in his hands a title and incentive of liberty. The  
 decree of the senate, which granted the most  
 ample prerogatives to the emperor Vespasian,  
 had been inscribed on a copper-plate still extant  
 in the choir of the church of St. John Lateran<sup>23</sup>.  
 A numerous assembly of nobles and plebeians  
 was invited to this political lecture, and a  
 convenient theatre was erected for their reception.  
 The notary appeared, in a magnificent and  
 mysterious habit, explained the inscription by  
 a version and commentary<sup>24</sup>; and descanted  
 with eloquence and zeal on the ancient glories  
 of the senate and people, from whom all legal  
 authority was derived. The supine ignorance  
 of the nobles was incapable of discerning the

serious tendency of such representations : they might sometimes chastise with words and blows the plebeian reformer; but he was often suffered in the Colonna palace to amuse the company with his threats and predictions ; and the modern Brutus <sup>CHAP.</sup> was concealed under the mask of folly and the character of a buffoon. While they indulged their contempt, the restoration of the *good estate*, his favourite expression, was entertained among the people as a desirable, a possible, and at length as an approaching, event; and while all had the disposition to applaud, some had the courage to assist, their promised deliverer. <sup>LXX.</sup>

A prophecy, or rather a summons, affixed on the church door of St. George, was the first public evidence of his designs; a nocturnal assembly of an hundred citizens on mount Aventine, the first step to their execution. After an oath of secrecy and aid, he represented to the conspirators the importance and facility of their enterprize; that the nobles, without union or resources, were strong only in the fear of their imaginary strength; that all power, as well as right, was in the hands of the people; that the revenues of the apostolical chamber might relieve the public distress; and that the pope himself would approve their victory over the common enemies of government and freedom. After securing a faithful band to protect his first declaration, he proclaimed through the city, by sound of trumpet, that on the evening of the following day all persons should assemble without

He assumes  
the govern-  
ment of  
Rome,  
A. D. 1347,  
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arms, before the church of St. Angelo, to provide for the re-establishment of the good estate. The whole night was employed in the celebration of thirty masses of the Holy Ghost; and in the morning, Rienzi, bareheaded, but in complete armour, issued from the church, encompassed by the hundred conspirators. The pope's vicar, the simple bishop of Orvieto, who had been persuaded to sustain a part in this singular ceremony, marched on his right-hand; and three great standards were borne aloft as the emblems of their design. In the first, the banner of *liberty*, Rome was seated on two lions, with a palm in one hand and a globe in the other: St. Paul, with a drawn sword, was delineated in the banner of *justice*, and in the third, St. Peter held the keys of *concord* and *peace*. Rienzi was encouraged by the presence and applause of an innumerable crowd, who understood little, and hoped much; and the procession slowly rolled forwards from the castle of St. Angelo to the Capitol. His triumph was disturbed by some secret emotions, which he laboured to suppress: he ascended without opposition, and with seeming confidence, the citadel of the republic; harangued the people from the balcony; and received the most flattering confirmation of his acts and laws. The nobles, as if destitute of arms and counsels, beheld in silent consternation this strange revolution; and the moment had been prudently chosen, when the most formidable, Stephen Colonna, was absent from the city. On the first rumour, he returned

to

to his palace, affected to despise this plebeian tumult, and declared to the messenger of Rienzi, that at his leisure he would cast the madman from the windows of the Capitol. The great bell instantly rang an alarm, and so rapid was the tide, so urgent was the danger, that Colonna escaped with precipitation to the suburb of St. Laurence: from thence, after a moment's refreshment he continued the same speedy career till he reached in safety his castle of Palestrina; lamenting his own imprudence, which had not trampled the spark of this mighty conflagration. A general and peremptory order was issued from the Capitol to all the nobles, that they should peaceably retire to their estates: they obeyed: and their departure secured the tranquillity of the free and obedient citizens of Rome.

But such voluntary obedience evaporates with the first transports of zeal; and Rienzi felt the importance of justifying his usurpation by a regular form and a legal title. At his own choice, the Roman people would have displayed their attachment and authority, by lavishing on his head the names of senator or consul, of king or emperor: he preferred the ancient and modest appellation of tribune; the protection of the commons was the essence of that sacred office; and they were ignorant, that it had never been invested with any share in the legislative or executive powers of the republic. In this character, and with the consent of the Romans, the tribune enacted the most salutary laws for the restoration

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with the title  
and office of  
tribune.

Laws of the  
good state.



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**C H A P.** and maintenance of the good estate. By the  
**LXX.** first he fulfils the wish of honesty and inexperience, that no civil suit should be protracted beyond the term of fifteen days. The danger of frequent perjury might justify the pronouncing against a false accuser the same penalty which his evidence would have inflicted: the disorders of the times might compel the legislator to punish every homicide with death, and every injury with equal retaliation. But the execution of justice was hopeless till he had previously abolished the tyranny of the nobles. It was formally provided, that none, except the supreme magistrate, should possess or command the gates, bridges, or towers, of the state: that no private garrisons should be introduced into the towns or castles of the Roman territory; that none should bear arms or presume to fortify their houses in the city or country; that the barons should be responsible for the safety of the highways and the free passage of provisions; and that the protection of malefactors and robbers should be expiated by a fine of a thousand marks of silver. But these regulations would have been impotent and nugatory; had not the licentious nobles been awed by the sword of the civil power. A sudden alarm from the bell of the Capitol, could still summon to the standard above twenty thousand volunteers: the support of the tribune and the laws required a more regular and permanent force. In each harbour of the coast, a vessel was stationed for the assurance of commerce; a standing militia of

three hundred and sixty horse and thirteen hundred foot was levied, cloathed, and paid in the thirteen quarters of the city: and the spirit of a commonwealth may be traced in the grateful allowance of one hundred florins, or pounds, to the heirs of every soldier who lost his life in the service of his country. For the maintenance of the public defence, for the establishment of granaries, for the relief of widows, orphans, and indigent convents, Rienzi applied, without fear of sacrilege, the revenues of the apostolic chamber: the three branches of hearth-money, the salt-duty, and the customs, were each of the annual produce of one hundred thousand florins<sup>22</sup>; and scandalous were the abuses, if in four or five months the amount of the salt-duty could be trebled by his judicious œconomy. After thus restoring the forces and finances of the republic, the tribune recalled the nobles from their solitary independence; required their personal appearance in the Capitol, and imposed an oath, of allegiance to the new government, and of submission to the laws of the good estate. Apprehensive for their safety, but still more apprehensive of the danger of a refusal, the princes and barons returned to their houses at Rome in the garb of simple and peaceful citizens: the Colonna and Ursini, the Savelli and Frangipani, were confounded before the tribunal of a plebeian, of the vile buffoon whom they had so often derided, and their disgrace was aggravated by the indignation which they vainly struggled to disguise. The same oath

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**C H A P.** was successively pronounced by the several orders  
**LXX.** of society, the clergy and gentlemen, the judges and notaries, the merchants and artisans, and the gradual descent was marked by the increase of sincerity and zeal. They swore to live and die with the republic and the church, whose interest was artfully united by the nominal association of the bishop of Orvieto, the pope's vicar, to the office of tribune. It was the boast of Rienzi, that he had delivered the throne and patrimony of St. Peter from a rebellious aristocracy; and Clement the sixth, who rejoiced in its fall, affected to believe the professions, to applaud the merits, and to confirm the title, of his trusty servant. The speech, perhaps the mind, of the tribune, was inspired with a lively regard for the purity of the faith; he insinuated his claim to a supernatural mission from the Holy Ghost: enforced by an heavy forfeiture the annual duty of confession and communion; and strictly guarded the spiritual as well as temporal welfare of his faithful people <sup>27</sup>.

Freedom and  
 prosperity of  
 the Roman  
 republic.

Never perhaps has the energy and effect of a single mind been more remarkably felt than in the sudden, though transient, reformation of Rome by the tribune Rienzi. A den of robbers was converted to the discipline of a camp or convent: patient to hear, swift to redress, inexorable to punish, his tribunal was always accessible to the poor and stranger; nor could birth, or dignity, or the immunities of the church, protect the offender or his accomplices. The privileged houses,

the private sanctuaries in Rome, on which no officer of justice would presume to trespass, were abolished; and he applied the timber and iron of their barricades in the fortifications of the Capitol. The venerable father of the Colonna was exposed in his own palace to the double shame of being desirous, and of being unable, to protect a criminal. A mule, with a jar of oil, had been stolen near Capranica; and the lord, of the Urfini family, was condemned to restore the damage, and to discharge a fine of four hundred florins for his negligence in guarding the highways. Nor were the persons of the barons more inviolate than their lands or houses: and either from accident or design, the same impartial rigour was exercised against the heads of the adverse factions. Peter Agapet Colonna, who had himself been senator of Rome, was arrested in the street for injury or debt; and justice was appeased by the tardy execution of Martin Urfini, who, among his various acts of violence and rapine, had pillaged a shipwrecked vessel at the mouth of the Tyber<sup>28</sup>. His name, the purple of two cardinals, his uncles, a recent marriage, and a mortal disease, were disregarded by the inflexible tribune, who had chosen his victim. The public officers dragged him from his palace and nuptial bed: his trial was short and satisfactory: the bell of the Capitol convened the people: stript of his mantle, on his knees, with his hands bound behind his back, he heard the sentence of death; and after a brief confession, Urfini was led away to the gallows.

C H A P. LXX. After such an example, none who were conscious of guilt could hope for impunity, and the flight of the wicked, the licentious, and the idle, soon purified the city and territory of Rome. In this time (says the historian) the woods began to rejoice that they were no longer infested with robbers; the oxen began to plough; the pilgrims visited the sanctuaries; the roads and inns were replenished with travellers; trade, plenty, and good faith were restored in the markets; and a purse of gold might be exposed without danger in the midst of the highway. As soon as the life and property of the subject are secure, the labours and rewards of industry spontaneously revive: Rome was still the metropolis of the Christian world; and the fame and fortunes of the tribune were diffused in every country by the strangers who had enjoyed the blessings of his government.

The tribune  
is respected  
in Italy, etc.

The deliverance of his country inspired Rienzi with a vast, and perhaps visionary, idea of uniting Italy in a great fœderative republic, of which Rome should be the ancient and lawful head, and the free cities and princes the members and associates. His pen was not less eloquent than his tongue; and his numerous epistles were delivered to swift and trusty messengers. On foot, with a white wand in their hand, they traversed the forests and mountains; enjoyed, in the most hostile states, the sacred security of ambassadors; and reported, in the style of flattery or truth, that the highways along their passage were lined

with kneeling multitudes, who implored Heaven for the success of their undertaking. Could passion have listened to reason; could private interest have yielded to the public welfare; the supreme tribunal and confederate union of the Italian republic might have healed their intestine discord, and closed the Alps against the Barbarians of the North. But the propitious season had elapsed; and if Venice, Florence, Sienna, Perugia, and many inferior cities, offered their lives and fortunes to the good estate, the tyrants of Lombardy and Tuscany must despise, or hate, the plebeian author of a free constitution. From them, however, and from every part of Italy, the tribune received the most friendly and respectful answers: they were followed by the ambassadors of the princes and republics; and in this foreign conflux, on all the occasions of pleasure or business, the low-born notary could assume the familiar or majestic courtesy of a sovereign". The most glorious circumstance of his reign was an appeal to his justice from Lewis king of Hungary, who complained, that his brother, and her husband, had been perfidiously strangled by Jane queen of Naples": her guilt or innocence was pleaded in a solemn trial at Rome; but after hearing the advocates", the tribune adjourned this weighty and invidious cause, which was soon determined by the sword of the Hungarian. Beyond the Alps, more especially at Avignon, the revolution was the theme of curiosity, wonder, and applause.

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**C H A P.** Petrarch had been the private friend, perhaps  
**LXX.** the secret counsellor, of Rienzi: his writings  
 and cele- breathe the most ardent spirit of patriotism and  
 brated by joy; and all respect for the pope, all gratitude  
 Petrarch, for the Colonna, was lost in the superior duties  
 of a Roman citizen. The poet-laureat of the  
 Capitol maintains the act, applauds the hero,  
 and mingles with some apprehension and advice  
 the most lofty hopes of the permanent and rising  
 greatness of the republic<sup>12</sup>.

His vices and  
 follies,

While Petrarch indulged these prophetic visions,  
 the Roman hero was fast declining from the meri-  
 dian of fame and power; and the people, who  
 had gazed with astonishment on the ascending  
 meteor, began to mark the irregularity of its  
 course, and the vicissitudes of light and obscurity.  
 More eloquent than judicious, more enterprising  
 than resolute, the faculties of Rienzi were not  
 balanced by cool and commanding reason: he  
 magnified in a tenfold proportion the objects of  
 hope and fear; and prudence, which could not  
 have erected, did not presume to fortify, his  
 throne. In the blaze of prosperity, his virtues  
 were insensibly tinged with the adjacent vices;  
 justice with cruelty, liberality with profusion,  
 and the desire of fame with puerile and ostenta-  
 tious vanity. He might have learned, that the  
 ancient tribunes, so strong and sacred in the  
 public opinion, were not distinguished in style,  
 habit, or appearance, from an ordinary plebei-  
 an<sup>13</sup>; and that as often as they visited the city  
 on foot, as single *viator*, or beadle, attended the

exercise of their office. The Gracchi would have frowned or smiled, could they have read the sonorous titles and epithets of their successor  
 "NICOLAS, SEVERE AND MERCIFUL; DELIVERER OF ROME; DEFENDER OF ITALY"; FRIEND OF MANKIND, AND OF LIBERTY, PEACE, AND JUSTICE; TRIBUNE AUGUST:" his theatrical pageants had prepared the revolution; but Rienzi abused, in luxury and pride, the political maxim of speaking to the eyes, as well as the understanding, of the multitude. From nature he had received the gift of an handsome person, till it was swelled and disfigured by intemperance; and his propensity to laughter was corrected in the magistrate by the affectation of gravity and sternness. He was clothed, at least on public occasions, in a party-coloured robe of velvet or satin, lined with fur, and embroidered with gold: the rod of justice, which he carried in his hand, was a sceptre of polished steel, crowned with a globe and cross of gold, and inclosing a small fragment of the true and holy wood. In his civil and religious processions through the city, he rode on a white steed, the symbol of royalty: the great banner of the republic, a sun with a circle of stars, a dove with an olive branch, was displayed over his head: a shower of gold and silver was scattered among the populace; fifty guards with halberds encompassed his person; a troop of horse preceded his march; and their tymbals and trumpets were of massy silver.

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The pomp of  
his knight-  
hood,A. D. 1347,  
August 1.

The ambition of the honours of chivalry betrayed the meanness of his birth, and degraded the importance of his office; and the equestrian tribune was not less odious to the nobles, whom he adopted, than to the plebeians, whom he deserted. All that yet remained of treasure, or luxury, or art, was exhausted on that solemn day. Rienzi led the procession from the Capitol to the Lateran, the tediousness of the way was relieved with decorations and games; the ecclesiastical, civil, and military orders marched under their various banners; the Roman ladies attended his wife; and the ambassadors of Italy might loudly applaud, or secretly deride, the novelty of the pomp. In the evening, when they had reached the church and palace of Constantine, he thanked and dismissed the numerous assembly, with an invitation to the festival of the ensuing day. From the hands of a venerable knight he received the order of the Holy Ghost; the purification of the bath was a previous ceremony; but in no step of his life did Rienzi excite such scandal and censure as by the profane use of the porphyry vase, in which Constantine (a foolish legend) had been healed of his leprosy by pope Sylvester". With equal presumption the tribune watched or reposed within the consecrated precincts of the baptistery; and the failure of his state-bed was interpreted as an omen of his approaching downfall. At the hour of worship he shewed himself to the returning crowds in a majestic attitude, with a robe of purple, his

sword, and gilt spurs; but the holy rites were soon interrupted by his levity and insolence. Rising from his throne, and advancing towards the congregation, he proclaimed in a loud voice: "We summon to our tribunal pope Clement; and command him to reside in his diocese of Rome: we also summon the sacred college of cardinals". We again summon the two pretenders, Charles of Bohemia and Lewis of Bavaria, who style themselves emperors: we likewise summon all the electors of Germany, to inform us on what pretence they have usurped the inalienable right of the Roman people, the ancient and lawful sovereigns of the empire". Unsheathing his maiden-sword, he thrice brandished it to the three parts of the world, and thrice repeated the extravagant declaration, "And this too is mine!" The pope's vicar, the bishop of Orvieto, attempted to check this career of folly; but his feeble protest was silenced by martial music; and instead of withdrawing from the assembly, he consented to dine with his brother tribune, at a table which had hitherto been reserved for the supreme pontiff. A banquet, such as the Cæsars had given, was prepared for the Romans. The apartments, porticoes, and courts, of the Lateran were spread with innumerable tables for either sex, and every condition; a stream of wine flowed from the nostrils of Constantine's brazen horse; no complaint, except of the scarcity of water, could be heard; and the licentiousness of the multitude

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**C H A P.** was curbed by discipline and fear. A subsequent  
**LXX.** day was appointed for the coronation of Rienzi";  
 and corona- seven crowns of different leaves or metals were  
 tion. successively placed on his head by the most eminent of the Roman clergy; they represented the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost; and he still professed to imitate the example of the ancient tribunes. These extraordinary spectacles might deceive or flatter the people; and their own vanity was gratified in the vanity of their leader. But in his private life he soon deviated from the strict rules of frugality and abstinence; and the plebeians, who were awed by the splendour of the nobles, were provoked by the luxury of their equal. His wife, his son, his uncle (a barber in name and profession), exposed the contrast of vulgar manners and princely expence; and without acquiring the majesty, Rienzi degenerated into the vices, of a king.

Fear and  
 hatred of the  
 nobles of  
 Rome.

A simple citizen describes with pity, or perhaps with pleasure, the humiliation of the barons of Rome. "Bareheaded, their hands crossed on their breast, they stood with downcast looks in the presence of the tribune; and they trembled, good God, how they trembled"! As long as the yoke of Rienzi was that of justice and their country, their conscience forced them to esteem the man, whom pride and interest provoked them to hate: his extravagant conduct soon fortified their hatred by contempt; and they conceived the hope of subverting a power which was no longer so deeply rooted in

the public confidence. The old animosity of the Colonna and Urfini was suspended for a moment by their common disgrace: they associated their wishes, and perhaps their designs; an assassin was seized and tortured; he accused the nobles; and as soon as Rienzi deserved the fate, he adopted the suspicions and maxims, of a tyrant. On the same day, under various pretences, he invited to the Capitol his principal enemies, among whom were five members of the Urfini and three of the Colonna name. But instead of a council or a banquet, they found themselves prisoners under the sword of despotism or justice; and the consciousness of innocence or guilt might inspire them with equal apprehensions of danger. At the sound of the great bell the people assembled; they were arraigned for a conspiracy against the tribune's life; and though some might sympathize in their distress, not a hand, nor a voice, was raised to rescue the first of the nobility from their impending doom. Their apparent boldness was prompted by despair; they passed in separate chambers a sleepless and painful night; and the venerable hero, Stephen Colonna, striking against the door of his prison, repeatedly urged his guards to deliver him by a speedy death from such ignominious servitude. In the morning they understood their sentence from the visit of a confessor and the tolling of the bell. The great hall of the Capitol had been decorated for the bloody scene with red and white hangings; the countenance of the tribune was dark and

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**C H A P. LXX.** severe; the swords of the executioners were unsheathed; and the barons were interrupted in their dying speeches by the sound of trumpets. But in this decisive moment, Rienzi was not less anxious or apprehensive than his captives: he dreaded the splendour of their names, their surviving kinsmen, the inconstancy of the people, the reproaches of the world; and, after rashly offering a mortal injury, he vainly presumed that, if he could forgive, he might himself be forgiven. His elaborate oration was that of a Christian and a suppliant; and, as the humble minister of the commons, he entreated his masters to pardon these noble criminals, for whose repentance and future service he pledged his faith and authority. "If you are spared," said the tribune, "by the mercy of the Romans, will you not promise to support the good estate with your lives and fortunes?" Astonished by this marvellous clemency, the barons bowed their heads; and, while they devoutly repeated the oath of allegiance, might whisper a secret, and more sincere, assurance of revenge. A priest, in the name of the people, pronounced their absolution; they received the communion with the tribune, assisted at the banquet, followed the procession; and, after every spiritual and temporal sign of reconciliation, were dismissed in safety to their respective homes, with the new honours and titles of generals, consuls, and patricians<sup>22</sup>.

They oppose  
Rienzi in  
arms.

During some weeks they were checked by the memory of their danger, rather than of their

deliverance, till the most powerful of the Urfini, escaping with the Colonna from the city, erected at Marino the standard of rebellion. The fortifications of the castle were hastily restored; the vassals attended their lord; the outlaws armed against the magistrate; the flocks and herds, the harvests and vineyards, from Marino to the gates of Rome, were swept away or destroyed; and the people arraigned Rienzi as the author of the calamities which his government had taught them to forget. In the camp, Rienzi appeared to less advantage than in the rostrum: and he neglected the progress of the rebel barons till their numbers were strong and their castles impregnable. From the pages of Livy he had not imbibed the art, or even the courage, of a general: an army of twenty thousand Romans returned without honour or effect from the attack of Marino: and his vengeance was amused by painting his enemies, their heads downwards, and drowning two dogs (at least they should have been bears) as the representatives of the Urfini. The belief of his incapacity encouraged their operations: they were invited by their secret adherents; and the barons attempted with four thousand foot and sixteen hundred horse, to enter Rome by force or surprise. The city was prepared for their reception: the alarm-bell rung all night; the gates were strictly guarded, or insolently open; and after some hesitation they founded a retreat. The two first divisions had passed along the walls, but the prospect of a free entrance tempted the headstrong valour of

C H A P.

LXX.

Defeat and  
death of the  
Colonna,  
Nov. 20.

the nobles in the rear; and after a successful skirmish, they were overthrown and massacred without quarter by the crowds of the Roman people. Stephen Colonna the younger, the noble spirit to whom Petrarch ascribed the restoration of Italy, was preceded or accompanied in death by his son John, a gallant youth, by his brother Peter, who might regret the ease and honours of the church, by a nephew of legitimate birth, and by two bastards of the Colonna race; and the number of seven, the seven crowns, as Rienzi styled them, of the Holy Ghost, was completed by the agony of the deplorable parent, of the veteran chief, who had survived the hope and fortune of his house. The vision and prophecies of St. Martin and pope Boniface had been used by the tribune to animate his troops: he displayed, at least in the pursuit, the spirit of an hero; but he forgot the maxims of the ancient Romans, who abhorred the triumphs of civil war. The conqueror ascended the Capitol; deposited his crown and sceptre on the altar; and boasted with some truth, that he had cut off an ear which neither pope nor emperor had been able to amputate. His base and implacable revenge denied the honours of burial; and the bodies of the Colonna, which he threatened to expose with those of the vilest malefactors, were secretly interred, by the holy virgins of their name and family. The people sympathized in their grief; repented of their own fury, and detested the indecent joy of Rienzi, who visited the spot where these illustrious victims

victims had fallen. It was on that fatal spot, C H A P. LXX. that he conferred on his son the honour of knighthood: and the ceremony was accomplished by a slight blow from each of the horsemen of the guard, and by a ridiculous and inhuman ablution from a pool of water, which was yet polluted with patrician blood “.

A short delay would have saved the Colonna, Fall and flight of the tribune Rienzi, A. D. 1247, Dec. 15. the delay of a single month, which elapsed between the triumph and the exile of Rienzi. In the pride of victory, he forfeited what yet remained of his civil virtues, without acquiring the fame of military prowess. A free and vigorous opposition was formed in the city; and when the tribune proposed in the public council “ to impose a new tax, and to regulate the government of Perugia, thirty-nine members voted against his measures; repelled the injurious charge of treachery and corruption; and urged him to prove, by their forcible exclusion, that, if the populace adhered to his cause, it was already disclaimed by the most respectable citizens. The pope and the sacred college had never been dazzled by his specious professions; they were justly offended by the insolence of his conduct; a cardinal legate was sent to Italy, and after some fruitless treaty, and two personal interviews, he fulminated a bull of excommunication, in which the tribune is degraded from his office, and branded with the guilt of rebellion, sacrilege, and heresy “.

The surviving barons of Rome were now humbled to a sense of allegiance; their interest and revenge



**C H A P.** engaged them in the service of the church ; but  
**LXX.** as the fate of the Colonna was before their eyes, they abandoned to a private adventurer the peril and glory of the revolution. John Pepin, count of Minorbino " in the kingdom of Naples, had been condemned for his crimes, or his riches, to perpetual imprisonment ; and Petrarch, by soliciting his release, indirectly contributed to the ruin of his friend. At the head of one hundred and fifty soldiers, the count of Minorbino introduced himself into Rome ; barricaded the quarter of the Colonna ; and found the enterprise as easy as it had seemed impossible. From the first alarm, the bell of the Capitol incessantly tolled ; but, instead of repairing to the well-known sound, the people was silent and inactive ; and the pusillanimous Rienzi, deploring their ingratitude with sighs and tears, abdicated the government and palace of the republic.

Revolutions  
 of Rome,  
 A. D.  
 1347—1354.

Without drawing his sword, count Pepin restored the aristocracy and the church ; three senators were chosen, and the legate assuming the first rank, accepted his two colleagues from the rival families of Colonna and Ursini. The acts of the tribune were abolished, his head was proscribed ; yet such was the terror of his name, that the barons hesitated three days before they would trust themselves in the city, and Rienzi was left above a month in the castle of St. Angelo, from whence he peaceably withdrew, after labouring, without effect, to revive the affection and courage of the Romans. The vision of freedom

and empire had vanished: their fallen spirit would have acquiesced in servitude, had it been smoothed by tranquillity and order: and it was scarcely observed, that the new senators derived their authority from the Apostolic See, that four cardinals were appointed to reform with dictatorial power the state of the republic. Rome was again agitated by the bloody feuds of the barons, who detested each other, and despised the commons; their hostile fortresses, both in town and country, again rose and were again demolished; and the peaceful citizens, a flock of sheep, were devoured, says the Florentine historian, by these rapacious wolves. But when their pride and avarice had exhausted the patience of the Romans, a confraternity of the Virgin Mary protected or avenged the republic: the bell of the Capitol was again tolled, the nobles in arms trembled in the presence of an unarmed multitude; and of the two senators, Colonna escaped from the window of the palace, and Urfini was stoned at the foot of the altar. The dangerous office of tribune was successively occupied by two plebeians, Cerroni and Baroncelli. The mildness of Cerroni was unequal to the times; and after a faint struggle, he retired with a fair reputation and a decent fortune to the comforts of a rural life. Devoid of eloquence or genius, Baroncelli was distinguished by a resolute spirit: he spoke the language of a patriot, and trode in the footsteps of tyrants; his suspicion was a sentence of death, and his own death was the reward of his cruelties.

**C H A P.** Amidst the public misfortunes, the faults of  
**LXX.** Rienzi were forgotten; and the Romans fought for the peace and prosperity of the good estate."

**Adventures  
 of Rienzi.**

After an exile of seven years, the first deliverer was again restored to his country. In the disguise of a monk or a pilgrim, he escaped from the castle of St. Angelo, implored the friendship of the king of Hungary at Naples, tempted the ambition of every bold adventurer, mingled at Rome with the pilgrims of the jubilee, lay concealed among the hermits of the Apennine, and wandered through the cities of Italy, Germany, and Bohemia. His person was invisible, his name was yet formidable; and the anxiety of the court of Avignon supposes, and even magnifies, his personal merit. The emperor Charles the fourth gave audience to a stranger, who frankly revealed himself as the tribune of the republic; and astonished an assembly of ambassadors and princes, by the eloquence of a patriot and the visions of a prophet, the downfall of tyranny and the kingdom of the Holy Ghost". Whatever had been his hopes, Rienzi found himself a captive; but he supported a character of independence and dignity, and obeyed, as his own choice, the irresistible summons of the supreme pontiff. The zeal of Petrarch, which had been cooled by the unworthy conduct, was rekindled by the sufferings and the presence, of his friend; and he boldly complains of the times, in which the saviour of Rome was delivered by her emperor into the hands of her bishop.

Rienzi was transported slowly, but in safe custody, from Prague to Avignon: his entrance into the city was that of a malefactor; in his prison he was chained by the leg; and four cardinals were named to enquire into the crimes of heresy and rebellion. But his trial and condemnation would have involved some questions, which it was more prudent to leave under the veil of mystery: the temporal supremacy of the popes; the duty of residence; the civil and ecclesiastical privileges of the clergy and people of Rome. The reigning pontiff well deserved the appellation of *Clement*: the strange vicissitudes and magnanimous spirit of the captive excited his pity and esteem; and Petrarch believes that he respected in the hero the name and sacred character of a poet<sup>22</sup>. Rienzi was indulged with an easy confinement and the use of books; and in the assiduous study of Livy and the bible, he sought the cause and the consolation of his misfortunes.

C H A P.  
LXX.  
A prisoner at  
Avignon.  
A. D. 1351.

The succeeding pontificate of Innocent the sixth opened a new prospect of his deliverance and restoration; and the court of Avignon was persuaded, that the successful rebel could alone appease and reform the anarchy of the metropolis. After a solemn profession of fidelity, the Roman tribune was sent into Italy, with the title of senator; but the death of Baroccelli appeared to supersede the use of his mission; and the legate, cardinal Alborno<sup>23</sup>, a consummate statesman, allowed him with reluctance, and without aid, to undertake the perilous experiment. His first

Rienzi, senator of Rome.  
A. D. 1354.

## 150 THE DECLINE AND FALL

C H A P. reception was equal to his wishes: the day of  
LXX. his entrance was a public festival; and his eloquence and authority revived the laws of the good estate. But this momentary sunshine was soon clouded by his own vices and those of the people: in the Capitol he might often regret the prison of Avignon; and after a second administration of four months, Rienzi was massacred in a tumult which had been fomented by the Roman barons. In the society of the Germans and Bohemians, he is said to have contracted the habits of intemperance and cruelty: adversity had chilled his enthusiasm, without fortifying his reason or virtue; and that youthful hope, that lively assurance, which is the pledge of success, was now succeeded by the cold impotence of distrust and despair. The tribune had reigned with absolute dominion, by the choice, and in the hearts, of the Romans: the senator was the servile minister of a foreign court; and while he was suspected by the people, he was abandoned by the prince. The legate Albornoz, who seemed desirous of his ruin, inflexibly refused all supplies of men and money; a faithful subject could no longer presume to touch the revenues of the apostolical chamber; and the first idea of a tax was the signal of clamour and sedition. Even his justice was tainted with the guilt or reproach of selfish cruelty: the most virtuous citizen of Rome was sacrificed to his jealousy; and in the execution of a public robber, from whose purse he had been assisted, the magistrate too much forgot, or too much remembered,

the obligations of the debtor". A civil war ex- C H A P.  
hausted his treasures, and the patience of the LXX.  
city: the Colonna maintained their hostile station  
at Palestrina; and his mercenaries soon despised a  
leader whose ignorance and fear were envious of  
all subordinate merit. In the death as in the life  
of Rienzi, the hero and the coward were strangely  
mingled. When the Capitol was invested by a  
furious multitude, when he was basely deserted  
by his civil and military servants, the intrepid  
senator, waving the banner of liberty, presented  
himself on the balcony, addressed his eloquence  
to the various passions of the Romans, and labour-  
ed to persuade them, that in the same cause him-  
self and the republic must either stand or fall. His  
oration was interrupted by a volley of impreca-  
tions and stones; and after an arrow had trans-  
pierced his hand, he sunk into abject despair,  
and fled weeping to the inner chambers, from  
whence he was let down by a sheet before the  
windows of the prison. Destitute of aid or  
hope, he was besieged till the evening: the doors  
of the Capitol were destroyed with axes and fire;  
and while the senator attempted to escape in a  
plebeian habit, he was discovered and dragged  
to the platform of the palace, the fatal scene of  
his judgments and executions. A whole hour,  
without voice or motion, he stood amidst the  
multitude half naked and half dead; their rage  
was hushed into curiosity and wonder; the last  
feelings of reverence and compassion yet strug-  
gled in his favour; and they might have prevailed;

**C H A P.** if a bold assassins had not plunged a dagger in his breast. He fell senseless with the first stroke; the impotent revenge of his enemies inflicted a thousand wounds; and the senator's body was abandoned to the dogs, to the Jews, and to the flames. Posterity will compare the virtues and failings of this extraordinary man; but in a long period of anarchy and servitude, the name of Rienzi has often been celebrated as the deliverer of his country, and the last of the Roman patriots".

**LXX.**  
His death,  
A. D. 1354.  
September 8.

Petrarch in-  
vites and up-  
braids the  
emperor  
Charles IV.  
A. D. 1355.  
January →  
May.

The first and most generous wish of Petrarch was the restoration of a free republic; but after the exile and death of his plebeian hero, he turned his eyes from the tribune, to the king, of the Romans. The Capitol was yet stained with the blood of Rienzi, when Charles the fourth descended from the Alps to obtain the Italian and Imperial crowns. In his passage through Milan he received the visit, and repaid the flattery, of the poet-laureat; accepted a medal of Augustus; and promised, without a smile, to imitate the founder of the Roman monarchy. A false application of the names and maxims of antiquity was the source of the hopes and disappointments of Petrarch; yet he could not overlook the difference of times and characters; the immeasurable distance between the first Cæsars and a Bohemian prince, who by the favour of the clergy had been elected the titular head of the German aristocracy. Instead of restoring to Rome her glory and her provinces, he had bound himself, by a secret treaty with the pope, to evacuate

the city on the day of his coronation; and his shameful retreat was pursued by the reproaches of the patriot bard".

C H A P.  
LXX.

After the loss of liberty and empire, his third and more humble wish, was to reconcile the shepherd with his flock; to recal the Roman bishop to his ancient and peculiar diocese. In the fervour of youth, with the authority of age, Petrarch addressed his exhortations to five successive popes, and his eloquence was always inspired by the enthusiasm of sentiment and the freedom of language". The son of a citizen of Florence invariably preferred the country of his birth to that of his education: and Italy, in his eyes, was the queen and garden of the world. Amidst her domestic factions, she was doubtless superior to France both in art and science, in wealth and politeness; but the difference could scarcely support the epithet of barbarous, which he promiscuously bestows on the countries beyond the Alps. Avignon, the mystic Babylon, the sink of vice and corruption, was the object of his hatred and contempt; but he forgets that her scandalous vices were not the growth of the soil, and that in every residence they would adhere to the power and luxury of the papal court. He confesses, that the successor of St. Peter is the bishop of the universal church; yet it was not on the banks of the Rhone, but of the Tyber, that the apostle had fixed his everlasting throne: and while every city in the Christian world was blessed with a bishop, the metropolis alone was

He solicits  
the popes of  
Avignon to  
fix their residence at  
Rome.



## 154 THE DECLINE AND FALL

**C H A P.** desolate and forlorn. Since the removal of the  
**LXX.** Holy See, the sacred buildings of the Lateran and the Vatican, their altars and their saints, were left in a state of poverty and decay; and Rome was often painted under the image of a disconsolate matron, as if the wandering husband could be reclaimed by the homely portrait of the age and infirmities of his weeping spouse". But the cloud which hung over the seven hills, would be dispelled by the presence of their lawful sovereign: eternal fame, the prosperity of Rome, and the peace of Italy, would be the recompence of the pope who should dare to embrace this generous resolution. Of the five whom Petrarch exhorted, the three first, John the twenty-second, Benedict the twelfth, and Clement the sixth, were importuned or amused by the boldness of the orator; but the memorable change which had been attempted by Urban the fifth, was finally accomplished by Gregory the eleventh. The execution of their design was opposed by weighty and almost insuperable obstacles. A king of France who has deserved the epithet of wise, was unwilling to release them from a local dependence: the cardinals, for the most part his subjects, were attached to the language, manners, and climate, of Avignon; to their stately palaces; above all, to the wines of Burgundy. In their eyes, Italy was foreign or hostile; and they reluctantly embarked at Marseilles, as if they had been sold or banished into the land of the Sarcens. Urban the fifth resided three years in the

Return of  
 Urban V.  
 A. D. 1367,  
 October 16—  
 A. D. 1370,  
 April 17.

Vatican with safety and honour: his sanctity was protected by a guard of two thousand horse; and the king of Cyprus, the queen of Naples, and the emperors of the East and West devoutly saluted their common father in the chair of St. Peter. But the joy of Petrarch and the Italians was soon turned into grief and indignation. Some reasons of public or private moment, his own impatience or the prayers of the cardinals, recalled Urban to France; and the approaching election was saved from the tyrannic patriotism of the Romans. The powers of heaven were interested in their cause: Bridget of Sweden, a saint and pilgrim, disapproved the return, and foretold the death, of Urban the fifth; the migration of Gregory the eleventh was encouraged by St. Catherine of Sienna, the spouse of Christ and ambassadresses of the Florentines; and the popes themselves, the great masters of human credulity, appear to have listened to these visionary females". Yet those celestial admonitions were supported by some arguments of temporal policy. The residence of Avignon had been invaded by hostile violence: at the head of thirty thousand robbers, an hero had extorted ransom and absolution from the vicar of Christ and the sacred college; and the maxim of the French warriors, to spare the people and plunder the church, was a new heresy of the most dangerous impost". While the pope was driven from Avignon, he was strenuously invited to Rome. The senate and people acknowledged him as their lawful sovereign, and

C H A P.  
LXX.

Final return  
of Gregory XI.  
A. D. 1377,  
January 17.

## 156 THE DECLINE AND FALL

**C H A P.** laid at his feet the keys of the gates, the bridges,  
**LXX.** and the fortresses; of the quarter at least beyond the Tyber ". But this loyal offer was accompanied by a declaration, that they could no longer suffer the scandal and calamity of his absence; and that his obstinacy would finally provoke them to revive and assert the primitive right of election. The abbot of mount Cassin had been consulted, whether he would accept the triple crown " from the clergy and people: " I am a citizen of " Rome ", " replied that venerable ecclesiastic, " and my first law is the voice of my country ".

His death,  
 A. D. 1378,  
 March 27.

Election of  
 Urban VI.  
 April 9. .

If superstition will interpret an untimely death "; if the merit of counsels be judged from the event; the heavens may seem to frown on a measure of such apparent reason and propriety. Gregory the eleventh did not survive above fourteen months his return to the Vatican; and his decease was followed by the great schism of the West which distracted the Latin church above forty years. The sacred college was then composed of twenty-two cardinals: six of these had remained at Avignon; eleven Frenchmen, one Spaniard, and four Italians, entered the conclave in the usual form. Their choice was not yet limited to the purple; and their unanimous votes acquiesced in the archbishop of Bari, a subject of Naples, conspicuous for his zeal and learning, who ascended the throne of St. Peter under the name of Urban the sixth. The epistle of the sacred college affirms his free and regular election; which had been inspired, as usual, by the holy Ghost; he was

adored, invested, and crowned, with the customary rights; his temporal authority was obeyed at Rome and Avignon, and his ecclesiastical supremacy was acknowledged in the Latin world. During several weeks, the cardinals attended their new master with the fairest professions of attachment and loyalty; till the summer-heats permitted a decent escape from the city. But as soon as they were united at Anagni and Fundi, in a place of security, they cast aside the mask, accused their own falsehood and hypocrisy, excommunicated the apostle and antichrist of Rome, and proceeded to a new election of Robert of Geneva, Clement the seventh, whom they announced to the nations as the true and rightful vicar of Christ. Their first choice, an involuntary and illegal act, was annulled by the fear of death and the menaces of the Romans; and their complaint is justified by the strong evidence of probability and fact. The twelve French cardinals, above two-thirds of the votes, were masters of the election; and whatever might be their provincial jealousies, it cannot fairly be presumed that they would have sacrificed their right and interest to a foreign candidate, who would never restore them to their native country. In the various, and often inconsistent, narratives “the shades of popular violence are more darkly or faintly coloured: but the licentiousness of the seditious Romans was inflamed by a sense of their privileges, and the danger of a second emigration. The conclave was intimidated by the shouts, and

CHAP.  
LXX.

Election of  
Clement VII.  
Sept. 21.

## 158 THE DECLINE AND FALL

C H A P. encompassed by the arms, of thirty thousand rebels;  
LXX. the bells of the Capitol and St. Peter's rang an alarm; "Death, or an Italian pope!" was the universal cry; the same threat was repeated by the twelve bannerets or chiefs of the quarters, in the form of charitable advice; some preparations were made for burning the obstinate cardinals; and had they chosen a Transalpine subject, it is probable that they would never have departed alive from the Vatican. The same constraint imposed the necessity of dissembling in the eyes of Rome and of the world: the pride and cruelty of Urban presented a more inevitable danger; and they soon discovered the features of the tyrant, who could walk in his garden and recite his breviary, while he heard from an adjacent chamber six cardinals groaning on the rack. His inflexible zeal, which loudly censured their luxury and vice, would have attached them to the stations and duties of their parishes at Rome; and had he not fatally delayed a new promotion, the French cardinals would have been reduced to an helpless minority in the sacred college. For these reasons, and in the hope of repassing the Alps, they rashly violated the peace and unity of the church; and the merits of their double choice are yet agitated in the Catholic schools<sup>7</sup>. The vanity, rather than the interest, of the nation determined the court and clergy of France<sup>8</sup>. The states of Savoy, Sicily, Cyprus, Arragon, Castille, Navarre, and Scotland, were inclined by their example and authority to the obedience,

of Clement the seventh, and, after his decease, of Benedict the thirteenth. Rome and the principal states of Italy, Germany, Portugal, England, the Low Countries, and the kingdoms of the North, adhered to the prior election of Urban the sixth, who was succeeded by Boniface the ninth, Innocent the seventh, and Gregory the twelfth.

From the banks of the Tyber and the Rhone, the hostile pontiffs encountered each other with the pen and the sword: the civil and ecclesiastical order of society was disturbed; and the Romans had their full share of the mischiefs of which they may be arraigned as the primary authors. They had vainly flattered themselves with the hope of restoring the seat of the ecclesiastical monarchy; and of relieving their poverty with the tributes and offerings of the nations; but the separation of France and Spain diverted the stream of lucrative devotion; nor could the loss be compensated by the two jubilees which were crowded into the space of ten years. By the avocations of the schism, by foreign arms, and popular tumults, Urban the sixth and his three successors were often compelled to interrupt their residence in the Vatican. The Colonna and Ursini still exercised their deadly feuds: the bannerets of Rome asserted and abused the privileges of a republic: the vicars of Christ, who had levied a military force, chastised their rebellion with the gibbet, the sword, and the dagger; and, in a friendly conference, eleven deputies of the people

C H. A. P.  
LXX.

Great schism  
of the West,  
A. D.  
1378—1418.

Calamities of  
Rome.

**C H A P.** were perfidiously murdered and cast into the street. Since the invasion of Robert the Norman, the Romans had pursued their domestic quarrels without the dangerous interposition of a stranger. But in the disorders of the schism, an aspiring neighbour, Ladislaus king of Naples, alternately supported and betrayed the pope and the people: by the former, he was declared *gonfalonier*, or general, of the church, while the latter submitted to his choice the nomination of their magistrates. Besieging Rome by land and water, he thrice entered the gates as a Barbarian conqueror; profaned the altars, violated the virgins, pillaged the merchants, performed his devotions at St. Peter's, and left a garrison in the castle of St. Angelo. His arms were sometimes unfortunate, and to a delay of three days he was indebted for his life and crown; but Ladislaus triumphed in his turn, and it was only his premature death that could save the metropolis and the ecclesiastical state from the ambitious conqueror, who had assumed the title, or at least the powers, of king of Rome<sup>71</sup>.

Negotiations  
for peace and  
union.

A. D.

1394—1407.

I have not undertaken the ecclesiastical history of the schism; but Rome, the object of these last chapters, is deeply interested in the disputed succession of her sovereigns. The first counsels for the peace and union of Christendom arose from the university of Paris, from the faculty of the Sorbonne, whose doctors were esteemed, at least in the Gallican church, as the most consummate masters of

of theological science". Prudently waving all invidious enquiry into the origin and merits of the dispute, they proposed, as an healing measure, that the two pretenders of Rome and Avignon should abdicate at the same time, after qualifying the cardinals of the adverse factions to join in a legitimate election; and that the nations should *substract* their obedience, if either of the competitors preferred his own interest to that of the public. At each vacancy, these physicians of the church deprecated the mischiefs of an hasty choice; but the policy of the conclave and the ambition of its members were deaf to reason and entreaties; and whatsoever promises were made, the pope could never be bound by the oaths of the cardinal. During fifteen years, the pacific designs of the university were eluded by the arts of the rival pontiffs, the scruples or passions of their adherents, and the vicissitudes of French factions, that ruled the insanity of Charles the sixth. At length a vigorous resolution was embraced; and a solemn embassy, of the titular patriarch of Alexandria, two archbishops, five bishops, five abbots, three knights, and twenty doctors, was sent to the courts of Avignon and Rome, to require, in the name of the church and king, the abdication of the two pretenders, of Peter de Luna, who styled himself Benedict the thirteenth, and of Angelo Corrario, who assumed the name of Gregory the twelfth. For the ancient honour of Rome, and the success of their commission, the ambassadors



**C H A P. LXX.** solicited a conference with the magistrate of the city, whom they gratified by a positive declaration, that the most Christian king did not entertain a wish of transporting the holy see from the Vatican, which he considered as the genuine and proper seat of the successor of St. Peter. In the name of the senate and people, an eloquent Roman asserted their desire to co-operate in the union of the church, deplored the temporal and spiritual calamities of the long schism, and requested the protection of France against the arms of the king of Naples. The answers of Benedict and Gregory were alike edifying and alike deceitful; and, in evading the demand of their abdication, the two rivals were animated by a common spirit. They agreed on the necessity of a previous interview, but the time, the place, and the manner, could never be ascertained by mutual consent. "If the one advances," says a servant of Gregory, "the other retreats; the one appears "an animal fearful of the land, the other a creature apprehensive of the water. And thus for a short remnant of life and power, will these aged priests endanger the peace and salvation of the Christian world?"

Council of  
Pisa,  
A. D. 1409.

The Christian world was at length provoked by their obstinacy and fraud: they were deserted by their cardinals, who embraced each other as friends and colleagues; and their revolt was supported by a numerous assembly of prelates and ambassadors. With equal justice, the council of Pisa deposed the popes of Rome and Avignon;

the conclave was unanimous in the choice of Alexander the fifth, and his vacant seat was soon filled by a similar election of John the twenty-third, the most profligate of mankind. But instead of extinguishing the schism, the rashness of the French and Italians had given a third pretender to the chair of St. Peter. Such new claims of the synod and conclave were disputed: three kings, of Germany, Hungary, and Naples, adhered to the cause of Gregory the twelfth; and Benedict the thirteenth, himself a Spaniard, was acknowledged by the devotion and patriotism of that powerful nation. The rash proceedings of Pisa were corrected by the council of Constance; the emperor Sigismund acted a conspicuous part as the advocate or protector of the Catholic church; and the number and weight of civil and ecclesiastical members might seem to constitute the states general of Europe. Of the three popes, John the twenty-third was the first victim: he fled and was brought back a prisoner: the most scandalous charges were suppressed; the vicar of Christ was only accused of piracy, murder, rape, sodomy, and incest; and after subscribing his own condemnation, he expiated in prison the imprudence of trusting his person to a free city beyond the Alps. Gregory the twelfth, whose obedience was reduced to the narrow precincts of Rimini, descended with more honour from the throne, and his ambassador convened the session, in which he renounced the title and authority of lawful pope. To vanquish the

C H A P.

LXX.

Council of  
Constance,  
A. D.

1414—1418,

M 2

C H A P. LXX. obstinacy of Benedict the thirteenth or his adherents, the emperor in person undertook a journey from Constance to Perpignan. The kings of Castille, Arragon, Navarre, and Scotland, obtained an equal and honourable treaty: with the concurrence of the Spaniards, Benedict was deposed by the council; but the harmless old man was left in a solitary castle to excommunicate twice each day the rebel kingdoms which had deserted his cause. After thus eradicating the remains of the schism, the synod of Constance proceeded with slow and cautious steps, to elect the sovereign of Rome and the head of the church. On this momentous occasion, the college of twenty-three cardinals was fortified with thirty deputies; six of whom were chosen in each of the five great nations of Christendom, the Italian, the German, the French, the Spanish, and the *English*<sup>71</sup>: the interference of strangers was softened by their generous preference of an Italian and a Roman; and the hereditary, as well as personal, merit of Otho Colonna recommended him to the conclave. Rome accepted with joy and obedience the noblest of her sons, the ecclesiastical state was defended by his powerful family, and the elevation of Martin the fifth is the æra of the restoration and establishment of the popes in the Vatican<sup>72</sup>.

Election of  
Martin V.

Martin V.  
A. D. 1417,  
Eugenius IV.  
A. D. 1431,  
Nicholas V.  
A. D. 1447.

The royal prerogative of coining money, which had been exercised near three hundred years by the senate, was *first* resumed by Martin the fifth<sup>73</sup>, and his image and superscription introduce the series of the papal medals. Of his two immediate

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successors, Eugenius the fourth was the *last* pope expelled by the tumults of the Roman people", and Nicholas the fifth, the *last* who was importuned by the presence of a Roman emperor".

I. The conflict of Eugenius, with the fathers of Basil, and the weight or apprehension of a new excise, emboldened and provoked the Romans to usurp the temporal government of the city.

Last revolt of  
Rome,  
A. D. 1434,  
May 29—  
October 26.

They rose in arms, elected seven governors of the republic, and a constable of the Capitol; imprisoned the pope's nephew; besieged his person in the palace; and shot volleys of arrows into his bark as he escaped down the Tyber in the habit of a monk. But he still possessed in the castle of St. Angelo a faithful garrison and a train of artillery: their batteries incessantly thundered on the city, and a bullet more dextrously pointed broke down the barricade of the bridge, and scattered with a single shot the heroes of the republic. Their constancy was exhausted by a rebellion of five months. Under the tyranny of the Ghibeline nobles, the wisest patriots regretted the dominion of the church; and their repentance was unanimous and effectual. The troops of St. Peter again occupied the Capitol; the magistrates departed to their homes; the most guilty were executed or exiled; and the legate, at the head of two thousand foot and four thousand horse, was saluted as the father of the city. The synods of Ferrara and Florence, the fear or resentment of Eugenius, prolonged his absence: he was received by a submissive people; but the pontiff

C H A P.  
LXX.

Last corona-  
tion of a Ger-  
man emperor  
Frederic III.  
A. D. 1452,  
March 18.

The statutes  
and govern-  
ment of  
Rome.

understood from the acclamations of his triumphal entry, that to secure their loyalty and his own repose, he must grant without delay the abolition of the odious excise. II. Rome was restored, adorned, and enlightened, by the peaceful reign of Nicholas the fifth. In the midst of these laudable occupations, the pope was alarmed by the approach of Frederic the third of Austria; though his fears could not be justified by the character or the power of the Imperial candidate. After drawing his military force to the metropolis, and imposing the best security of oaths<sup>o</sup> and treaties, Nicholas received with a smiling countenance the faithful advocate and vassal of the church. So tame were the times, so feeble was the Austrian, that the pomp of his coronation was accomplished with order and harmony: but the superfluous honour was so disgraceful to an independent nation, that his successors have excused themselves from the toilsome pilgrimage of the Vatican; and rest their Imperial title on the choice of the electors of Germany.

A citizen has remarked, with pride and pleasure, that the king of the Romans, after passing with a slight salute the cardinals and prelates who met him at the gate, distinguished the dress and person of the senator of Rome; and in this last farewell, the pageants of the empire and the republic were clasped in a friendly embrace<sup>o</sup>. According to the laws of Rome<sup>o</sup>, her first magistrate was required to be a doctor of laws, an alien, of a place at least forty miles from the city;

with whose inhabitants he must not be connected in the third canonical degree of blood or alliance. C H A P. LXX.

The election was annual: a severe scrutiny was instituted into the conduct of the departing senator; nor could he be recalled to the same office till after the expiration of two years. A liberal salary of three thousand florins was assigned for his expence and reward; and his public appearance represented the majesty of the republic. His robes were of gold brocade or crimson velvet, or in the summer season of a lighter silk; he bore in his hand an ivory sceptre; the sound of trumpets announced his approach; and his solemn steps were preceded at least by four lictors or attendants, whose red wands were enveloped with bands or streamers of the golden colour or livery of the city. His oath in the Capitol proclaims his right and duty, to observe and assert the laws, to control the proud, to protect the poor, and to exercise justice and mercy within the extent of his jurisdiction. In these useful functions he was assisted by three learned strangers; the two *collaterals*, and the judge of criminal appeals: their frequent trials of robberies, rapes, and murders, are attested by the laws; and the weakness of these laws connives at the licentiousness of private feuds and armed associations for mutual defence. But the senator was confined to the administration of justice: the Capitol, the treasury, and the government of the city and its territory were entrusted to the three *conservators*, who were changed four times in each year: the

CHAP. LXX. militia of the thirteen regions assembled under the banners of their respective chiefs, or *caporioni*; and the first of these was distinguished by the name and dignity of the *prior*. The popular legislature consisted of the secret and the common councils of the Romans. The former was composed of the magistrates and their immediate predecessors, with some fiscal and legal officers, and three classes of thirteen, twenty-six, and forty, counsellors; amounting in the whole to about one hundred and twenty persons. In the common council all male citizens had a right to vote; and the value of their privilege was enhanced by the care with which any foreigners were prevented from usurping the title and character of Romans. The tumult of a democracy was checked by wise and jealous precautions: except the magistrates, none could propose a question; none were permitted to speak, except from an open pulpit or tribunal; all disorderly acclamations were suppressed; the sense of the majority was decided by a secret ballot; and their decrees were promulgated in the venerable name of the Roman senate and people. It would not be easy to assign a period in which this theory of government has been reduced to accurate and constant practice, since the establishment of order has been gradually connected with the decay of liberty. But in the year one thousand five hundred and eighty, the ancient statutes were collected, methodised in three books, and adapted to present use, under the pontificate, and with the appro-

bation, of Gregory the thirteenth<sup>33</sup>: this civil and criminal code is the modern law of the city; and, if the popular assemblies have been abolished, a foreign senator, with the three conservators, still resides in the palace of the Capitol<sup>34</sup>. The policy of the Cæsars has been repeated by the popes; and the bishop of Rome affected to maintain the form of a republic; while he reigned with the absolute powers of a temporal, as well as spiritual, monarch.

It is an obvious truth, that the times must be suited to extraordinary characters, and that the genius of Cromwel or Retz might now expire in obscurity. The political enthusiasm of Rienzi had exalted him to a throne; the same enthusiasm, in the next century, conducted his imitator to the gallows. The birth of Stephen Porcaro was noble, his reputation spotless; his tongue was armed with eloquence, his mind was enlightened with learning; and he aspired, beyond the aim of vulgar ambition, to free his country and immortalize his name. The dominion of priests is most odious to a liberal spirit: every scruple was removed by the recent knowledge of the fable and forgery of Constantine's donation; Petrarch was now the oracle of the Italians; and as often as Porcaro revolved the ode which describes the patriot and hero of Rome, he applied to himself the visions of the prophetic bard. His first trial of the popular feelings was at the funeral of Eugenius the fourth: in an elaborate speech he called the Romans to liberty and arms; and they listened

C H A P.

LXX.

Conspiracy of  
Porcaro,  
A. D. 1453,  
January 9.



C H A P. with apparent pleasure, till Porcaro was interrupted and answered by a grave advocate, who pleaded for the church and state. By every law the seditious orator was guilty of treason; but the benevolence of the new pontiff, who viewed his character with pity and esteem, attempted by an honourable office to convert the patriot into a friend. The inflexible Roman returned from Anagni with an increase of reputation and zeal; and, on the first opportunity, the games of the place Navona, he tried to inflame the casual dispute of some boys and mechanics into a general rising of the people. Yet the humane Nicholas was still averse to accept the forfeit of his life; and the traitor was removed from the scene of temptation to Bologna, with a liberal allowance for his support, and the easy obligation of presenting himself each day before the governor of the city. But Porcaro had learned from the younger Brutus, that with tyrants no faith or gratitude should be observed: the exile declaimed against the arbitrary sentence; a party and a conspiracy was gradually formed; his nephew, a daring youth, assembled a band of volunteers; and on the appointed evening, a feast was prepared at his house for the friends of the republic. Their leader, who had escaped from Bologna, appeared among them in a robe of purple and gold: his voice, his countenance, his gestures, bespoke the man who had devoted his life or death to the glorious cause. In a studied oration, he expatiated on the motives and the means of their

enterprize: the name and liberties of Rome; the sloth and pride of their ecclesiastical tyrants; the active or passive consent of their fellow-citizens; three hundred foldiers, and four hundred exiles, long exercised in arms or in wrongs; the licence of revenge to edge their swords, and a million of ducats to reward their victory. It would be easy (he said), on the next day, the festival of the Epiphany, to seize the pope and his cardinals before the doors, or at the altar, of St. Peter's; to lead them in chains under the walls of St. Angelo; to extort by the threat of their instant death a surrender of the castle; to ascend the vacant Capitol; to ring the alarm-bell; and to restore in a popular assembly the ancient republic of Rome. While he triumphed, he was already betrayed. The senator, with a strong guard, invested the house: the nephew of Porcaro cut his way through the crowd; but the unfortunate Stephen was drawn from a chest, lamenting that his enemies had anticipated by three hours the execution of his design. After such manifest and repeated guilt, even the mercy of Nicholas was silent. Porcaro, and nine of his accomplices, were hanged without the benefit of the sacraments; and amidst the fears and invectives of the papal court, the Romans pitied, and almost applauded; these martyrs of their country ". But their applause was mute, their pity ineffectual, their liberty for ever extinct; and, if they have since risen in a vacancy of the throne or a scarcity of

C H A P.

LXX.

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C H A P. bread, such accidental tumults may be found in  
LXX. the bosom of the most abject servitude.

Laſt diſorders  
of the nobles  
of Rome,

But the independence of the nobles, which was fomented by diſcord, ſurvived the freedom of the commons, which muſt be founded in union. A privilege of rapine and oppreſſion was long maintained by the barons of Rome; their houſes were a fortreſs and a ſanctuary: and the ferocious train of banditti and criminals whom they protected from the law, repaid the hoſpitality with the ſervice of their ſwords and daggers. The private intereſt of the pontiffs, or their nephews, ſometimes involved them in theſe domeſtic feuds. Under the reign of Sixtus the fourth, Rome was diſtracted by the battles and ſieges of the rival houſes: after the conflagration of his palace, the protonotary Colonna was tortured and beheaded; and Savelli, his captive friend, was murdered on the ſpot, for reſuſing to join in the acclamations of the victorious Urſini". But the popes no longer trembled in the Vatican: they had ſtrength to command, if they had reſolution to claim, the obedience of their ſubjects; and the ſtrangers, who obſerved theſe partial diſorders, admired the eaſy taxes and wiſe adminiſtration of the eccleſiaſtical ſtate".

The popes  
acquire the  
absolute do-  
minion of  
Rome,  
A. D. 1500,  
etc.

The ſpiritual thunders of the Vatican depend on the force of opinion: and, if that opinion be ſupplanted by reaſon or paſſion, the ſound may idly waſte itſelf in the air; and the helpless prieſt is expoſed to the brutal violence of a noble or a plebeian adverſary. But after their return

from Avignon, the keys of St. Peter were guarded by the sword of St. Paul. Rome was commanded by an impregnable citadel: the use of cannon is a powerful engine against popular seditions: a regular force of cavalry and infantry was enlisted under the banners of the pope: his ample revenues supplied the resources of war; and, from the extent of his domain, he could bring down on a rebellious city an army of hostile neighbours and loyal subjects". Since the union of the duchies of Ferrara and Urbino, the ecclesiastical state extends from the Mediterranean to the Adriatic, and from the confines of Naples to the banks of the Po; and as early as the sixteenth century, the greater part of that spacious and fruitful country acknowledged the lawful claims and temporal sovereignty of the Roman pontiffs. Their claims were readily deduced from the genuine, or fabulous; donations of the darker ages: the successive steps of their final settlement would engage us too far in the transactions of Italy, and even of Europe; the crimes of Alexander the sixth, the martial operations of Julius the second, and the liberal policy of Leo the tenth, a theme which has been adorned by the pens of the noblest historians of the times". In the first period of their conquests, till the expedition of Charles the eighth, the popes might successfully wrestle with the adjacent princes and states, whose military force was equal, or inferior, to their own. But as soon as the monarchs of France, Germany, and Spain, contended with

**C H A P.** gigantic arms for the dominion of Italy, they  
**LXX.** supplied with art the deficiency of strength; and concealed, in a labyrinth of wars and treaties, their aspiring views, and the immortal hope of chasing the Barbarians beyond the Alps. The nice balance of the Vatican was often subverted by the soldiers of the North and West, who were united under the standard of Charles the fifth: the feeble and fluctuating policy of Clement the seventh exposed his person and dominions to the conqueror; and Rome was abandoned seven months to a lawless army, more cruel and rapacious than the Goths and Vandals ". After this severe lesson, the popes contracted their ambition, which was almost satisfied, resumed the character of a common parent, and abstained from all offensive hostilities, except in an hasty quarrel, when the vicar of Christ and the Turkish sultan were armed at the same time against the kingdom of Naples ". The French and Germans at length withdrew from the field of battle: Milan, Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, and the sea-coast of Tuscany, were firmly possessed by the Spaniards; and it became their interest to maintain the peace and dependence of Italy, which continued almost without disturbance from the middle of the sixteenth to the opening of the eighteenth century. The Vatican was swayed and protected by the religious policy of the Catholic king: his prejudice and interest disposed him in every dispute to support the prince against the people; and instead of the encouragement, the aid, and the asylum,

which they obtained from the adjacent states, the friends of liberty, or the enemies of law, were enclosed on all sides within the iron circle of despotism. The long habits of obedience and education subdued the turbulent spirit of the nobles and commons of Rome. The barons forgot the arms and factions of their ancestors, and insensibly became the servants of luxury and government. Instead of maintaining a crowd of tenants and followers, the produce of their estates was consumed in the private expences, which multiply the pleasures, and diminish the power, of the lord. The Colonna and Ursini vied with each other in the decoration of their palaces and chapels; and their antique splendour was rivalled or surpassed by the sudden opulence of the papal families. In Rome the voice of freedom and discord is no longer heard; and, instead of the foaming torrent, a smooth and stagnant lake reflects the image of idleness and servitude.

A Christian, a philosopher, and a patriot, will be equally scandalized by the temporal kingdom of the clergy; and the local majesty of Rome, the remembrance of her consuls and triumphs, may seem to embitter the sense, and aggravate the shame, of her slavery. If we calmly weigh the merits and defects of the ecclesiastical government, it may be praised in its present state as a mild, decent, and tranquil system, exempt from the dangers of a minority, the follies of youth, the expences of luxury, and the calamities of war. But these advantages are overbalanced

C H A P.

LXX.

The ecclesiastical government.

C H A P. by a frequent, perhaps a septennial, election of a  
 LXX. sovereign, who is seldom a native of the country: the reign of a *young* statesman of threescore, in the decline of his life and abilities, without hope to accomplish, and without children to inherit, the labours of his transitory reign. The successful candidate is drawn from the church, and even the convent; from the mode of education and life the most adverse to reason, humanity, and freedom. In the trammels of servile faith, he has learned to believe because it is absurd, to revere all that is contemptible, and to despise whatever might deserve the esteem of a rational being; to punish error as a crime, to reward mortification and celibacy, as the first of virtues; to place the saints of the kalendar "above the heroes of Rome and the sages of Athens; and to consider the missal, or the crucifix, as more useful instruments than the plough or the loom. In the office of nuncio, or the rank of cardinal, he may acquire some knowledge of the world, but the primitive stain will adhere to his mind and manners; from study and experience he may suspect the mystery of his profession; but the sacerdotal artist will imbibe some portion of the bigotry which he inculcates. The genius of Sixtus the fifth "burst from the gloom of a Franciscan cloister. In a reign of five years, he exterminated the outlaws and banditti, abolished the *profane* sanctuaries of Rome ", formed a naval and military force, restored and emulated the monuments of antiquity, and after a liberal  
 use

Sixtus V.

A. D.

1585 — 1590.

use and large increase of the revenue, left five millions of crowns in the castle of St. Angelo. But his justice was sullied with cruelty, his activity was prompted by the ambition of conquest; after his decease, the abuses revived; the treasure was dissipated; he entailed on posterity thirty-five new taxes and the venality of offices; and, after his death, his statue was demolished by an ungrateful, or an injured, people". The wild and original character of Sixtus the fifth stands alone in the series of the pontiffs: the maxims and effects of their temporal government may be collected from the positive and comparative view of the arts and philosophy, the agriculture and trade, the wealth and population, of the ecclesiastical state. For myself, it is my wish to depart in charity with all mankind; nor am I willing, in these last moments, to offend even the pope and clergy of Rome".

C H A P.  
LXX.



## C H A P LXXI.

*Prospect of the Ruins of Rome in the Fifteenth Century.  
— Four Causes of Decay and Destruction. — Example  
of the Coliseum. — Renovation of the City — Conclusion  
of the whole Work.*

C H A P.  
LXXI.  
View and  
discourse of  
Poggius from  
the Capito-  
line hill,  
A. D. 1430,

**I**N the last days of pope Eugenius the fourth, two of his servants, the learned Poggius<sup>1</sup> and a friend, ascended the Capitoline hill; reposed themselves among the ruins of columns and temples; and viewed from that commanding spot the wide and various prospect of desolation<sup>2</sup>. The place and the object gave ample scope for moralizing on the vicissitudes of fortune, which spares neither man nor the proudest of his works, which buries empires and cities in a common grave; and it was agreed, that in proportion to her former greatness, the fall of Rome was the more awful and deplorable. “ Her primæval  
“ state, such as she might appear in a remote  
“ age, when Evander entertained the stranger of  
“ Troy<sup>3</sup>, has been delineated by the fancy of  
“ Virgil. This Tarpeian rock was then a savage  
“ and solitary thicket: in the time of the poet, it  
“ was crowned with the golden roofs of a temple;  
“ the temple is overthrown, the gold has been

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" pillaged, the wheel of fortune has accomplished  
 " her revolution, and the sacred ground is again  
 " disfigured with thorns and brambles. The hill  
 " of the Capitol, on which we sit, was formerly  
 " the head of the Roman empire, the citadel of  
 " the earth, the terror of kings; illustrated by  
 " the footsteps of so many triumphs; enriched  
 " with the spoils and tributes of so many nations.  
 " This spectacle of the world, how is it fallen!  
 " how changed! how defaced! the path of victory  
 " is obliterated by vines, and the benches of the  
 " senators are concealed by a dunghill. Cast  
 " your eyes on the Palatine hill, and seek among  
 " the shapeless and enormous fragments, the  
 " marble theatre, the obelisks, the colossal statues,  
 " the porticoes of Nero's palace: survey the  
 " other hills of the city, the vacant space is  
 " interrupted only by ruins and gardens. The  
 " forum of the Roman people, where they  
 " assembled to enact their laws and elect their  
 " magistrates, is now enclosed for the cultivation  
 " of pot-herbs, or thrown open for the reception  
 " of swine and buffaloes. The public and private  
 " edifices, that were founded for eternity, lie  
 " prostrate, naked, and broken, like the limbs  
 " of a mighty giant; and the ruin is the more  
 " visible, from the stupendous relics that have  
 " survived the injuries of time and fortune."

These relics are minutely described by Poggius, His description of the ruins.  
 one of the first who raised his eyes from the  
 monuments of legendary, to those of classic,  
 superstition. 1. Besides a bridge, an arch, a

N 2

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C H A P. sepulchre, and the pyramid of Cestius, he could  
 LXXL discern, of the age of the republic, a double  
 row of vaults in the salt-office of the Capitol;  
 which were inscribed with the name and munifi-  
 cence of Catulus. 2. Eleven temples were visible  
 in some degree, from the perfect form of the  
 Pantheon; to the three arches and a marble column  
 of the temple of peace, which Vespasian erected  
 after the civil wars and the Jewish triumph 3. Of  
 the number, which he rashly defines, of seven  
*therma* or public baths, none were sufficiently  
 entire to represent the use and distribution of  
 the several parts; but those of Diocletian and  
 Antoninus Caracalla still retained the titles of  
 the founders, and astonished the curious spectator,  
 who, in observing their solidity and extent, the  
 variety of marbles, the size and multitude of the  
 columns, compared the labour and expence with  
 the use and importance. Of the baths of Con-  
 stantine, of Alexander, of Domitian, or rather  
 of Titus, some vestige might yet be found.  
 4. The triumphal arches of Titus, Severus, and  
 Constantine, were entire, both the structure and  
 the inscriptions; a falling fragment was honoured  
 with the name of Trajan; and two arches, then  
 extant, in the Flaminian way, have been ascribed  
 to the baser memory of Faustina and Gallienus.  
 5. After the wonder of the Coliseum, Poggius  
 might have overlooked a small amphitheatre of  
 brick, most probably for the use of the prætorian  
 camp: the theatres of Marcellus and Pompey  
 were occupied in a great measure by public and

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private buildings; and in the Circus, Agonalis and Maximus, little more than the situation and the form could be investigated. 6. The columns of Trajan and Antonine were still erect; but the Egyptian obelisks were broken or buried. A people of gods and heroes, the workmanship of art, was reduced to one equestrian figure of gilt brass, and to five marble statues, of which the most conspicuous were the two horses of Phidias and Praxiteles. 7. The two mausoleums or sepulchres of Augustus and Hadrian could not totally be lost; but the former was only visible as a mound of earth; and the latter, the castle of St. Angelo, had acquired the name and appearance of a modern fortress. With the addition of some separate and nameless columns, such were the remains of the ancient city: for the marks of a more recent structure might be detected in the walls, which formed a circumference of ten miles, included three hundred and seventy-nine turrets, and opened into the country by thirteen gates.

This melancholy picture was drawn above nine hundred years after the fall of the Western empire, and even of the Gothic kingdom of Italy. A long period of distress and anarchy, in which empire, and arts, and riches, had migrated from the banks of the Tyber, was incapable of restoring or adorning the city; and, as all that is human must retrograde if it do not advance, every successive age must have hastened the ruin of the works of antiquity. To measure

C H A P.  
LXXX.

Gradual decay of Rome.

**C H A P.** the progress of decay, and to ascertain at each æra the state of each edifice, would be an endless and a useless labour, and I shall content myself with two observations which will introduce a short enquiry into the general causes and effects.

**LXXI.** 1. Two hundred years before the eloquent complaint of Poggius, an anonymous writer composed a description of Rome. His ignorance may repeat the same objects under strange and fabulous names. Yet this barbarous topographer had eyes and ears, he could observe the visible remains, he could listen to the tradition of the people, and he distinctly enumerates seven theatres, eleven baths, twelve arches, and eighteen palaces, of which many had disappeared before the time of Poggius. It is apparent, that many stately monuments of antiquity survived till a late period, and that the principles of destruction acted with vigorous and increasing energy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. 2. The same reflection must be applied to the three last ages; and we should vainly seek the Septizonium of Severus, which is celebrated by Petrarch and the antiquarians of the sixteenth century. While the Roman edifices were still entire, the first blows, however weighty and impetuous, were resisted by the solidity of the mass and the harmony of the parts; but the slightest touch would precipitate the fragments of arches and columns, that already nodded to their fall.

Four causes  
of destruc-  
tion:

After a diligent enquiry, I can discern four principal causes of the ruin of Rome, which continued to operate in a period of more than a

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thousand years. I. The injuries of time and nature. II. The hostile attacks of the Barbarians and Christians. III. The use and abuse of the materials. And, IV. The domestic quarrels of the Romans.

I. The art of man is able to construct monuments far more permanent than the narrow span of his own existence: yet these monuments, like himself, are perishable and frail; and in the boundless annals of time, his life and his labours must equally be measured as a fleeting moment. Of a simple and solid edifice, it is not easy however to circumscribe the duration. As the wonders of ancient days, the pyramids attracted the curiosity of the ancients: an hundred generations, the leaves of autumn<sup>10</sup>, have dropt into the grave; and after the fall of the Pharaohs and Ptolemies, the Cæsars and caliphs, the same pyramids stand erect and unshaken above the floods of the Nile. A complex figure of various and minute parts is more accessible to injury and decay; and the silent lapse of time is often accelerated by hurricanes and earthquakes, by fires and inundations. The air and earth have doubtless been shaken; and the lofty turrets of Rome have tottered from their foundations: but the seven hills do not appear to be placed on the great cavities of the globe; nor has the city, in any age, been exposed to the convulsions of nature, which, in the climate of Antioch, Lisbon, or Lima, have crumbled in a few moments the works of ages into dust. Fire is the most powerful fires;

C H A P.  
LXXI.

I. The injuries of nature;

hurricanes and earthquakes;

- CHAPTER. agent of life and death: the rapid mischief may be kindled and propagated by the industry or negligence of mankind; and every period of the Roman annals is marked by the repetition of similar calamities. A memorable conflagration, the guilt or misfortune of Nero's reign, continued, though with unequal fury, either six, or nine days<sup>11</sup>. Innumerable buildings, crowded in close and crooked streets, supplied perpetual fuel for the flames; and when they ceased, four only of the fourteen regions were left entire; three were totally destroyed, and seven were deformed by the relics of smoking and lacerated edifices<sup>12</sup>. In the full meridian of empire, the metropolis arose with fresh beauty from her ashes; yet the memory of the old deplored their irreparable losses, the arts of Greece, the trophies of victory, the monuments of primitive or fabulous antiquity. In the days of distress and anarchy, every wound is mortal, every fall irretrievable; nor can the damage be restored either by the public care of government or the activity of private interest. Yet two causes may be alleged, which render the calamity of fire more destructive to a flourishing than a decayed city. 1. The more combustible materials of brick; timber, and metals, are first melted or consumed; but the flames may play without injury or effect on the naked walls, and massy arches, that have been despoiled of their ornaments. 2. It is among the common and plebeian habitations, that a mischievous spark is most easily blown to a

conflagration; but as soon as they are devoured, the greater edifices which have resisted or escaped, are left as so many islands in a state of solitude and safety. From her situation, Rome is exposed to the danger of frequent inundations. Without excepting the Tyber, the rivers that descend from either side of the Apennine have a short and irregular course: a shallow stream in the summer heats; an impetuous torrent, when it is swelled in the spring or winter, by the fall of rain, and the melting of the snows. When the current is repelled from the sea by adverse winds, when the ordinary bed is inadequate to the weight of waters, they rise above the banks, and overspread, without limits or control, the plains and cities of the adjacent country. Soon after the triumph of the first Punic war, the Tyber was increased by unusual rains; and the inundation, surpassing all former measure of time and place, destroyed all the buildings that were situate below the hills of Rome. According to the variety of ground, the same mischief was produced by different means; and the edifices were either swept away by the sudden impulse, or dissolved and undermined by the long continuance, of the flood<sup>11</sup>. Under the reign of Augustus, the same calamity was renewed: the lawless river overturned the palaces and temples on its banks<sup>12</sup>; and, after the labours of the emperor in cleansing and widening the bed that was incumbered with ruins<sup>13</sup>, the vigilance of his successors was exercised by similar dangers and designs. The

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inunda-  
tions.



C H A P. LXXI. project of diverting into new channels the Tyber itself, or some of the dependant streams, was long opposed by superstition and local interests<sup>16</sup>; nor did the use compensate the toil and cost of the tardy and imperfect execution. The servitude of rivers is the noblest and most important victory which man has obtained over the licentiousness of nature<sup>17</sup>; and if such were the ravages of the Tyber under a firm and active government, what could oppose, or who can enumerate, the injuries of the city after the fall of the Western empire? A remedy was at length produced by the evil itself: the accumulation of rubbish and the earth, that has been washed down from the hills, is supposed to have elevated the plain of Rome, fourteen or fifteen feet, perhaps, above the ancient level<sup>18</sup>: and the modern city is less accessible to the attacks of the river<sup>19</sup>.

II. The hostile attacks of the Barbarians and Christians.

II. The crowd of writers of every nation, who impute the destruction of the Roman monuments to the Goths and the Christians, have neglected to enquire how far they were animated by an hostile principle, and how far they possessed the means and the leisure to satiate their enmity. In the preceding volumes of this History, I have described the triumph of barbarism and religion; and I can only resume, in a few words, their real or imaginary connection with the ruin of ancient Rome. Our fancy may create, or adopt, a pleasing romance, that the Goths and Vandals sallied from Scandinavia, ardent to avenge the flight of Odin<sup>20</sup>, to break the chains, and to

chastise the oppressors, of mankind; that they wished to burn the records of classic literature, and to found their national architecture on the broken members of the Tuscan and Corinthian orders. But in simple truth, the northern conquerors were neither sufficiently savage, nor sufficiently refined, to entertain such aspiring ideas of destruction and revenge. The shepherds of Scythia and Germany had been educated in the armies of the empire, whose discipline they acquired, and whose weakness they invaded: with the familiar use of the Latin tongue, they had learned to reverence the name and titles of Rome; and, though incapable of emulating, they were more inclined to admire, than to abolish, the arts and studies of a brighter period. In the transient possession of a rich and unresisting capital, the soldiers of Alario and Genferic were stimulated by the passions of a victorious army; amidst the wanton indulgence of lust or cruelty, portable wealth was the object of their search; nor could they derive either pride or pleasure from the unprofitable reflection, that they had battered to the ground the works of the consuls and Cæsars. Their moments were indeed precious; the Goths evacuated Rome on the sixth<sup>21</sup>, the Vandals on the fifteenth, day<sup>22</sup>; and, though it be far more difficult to build than to destroy, their hasty assault would have made a slight impression on the solid piles of antiquity. We may remember, that both Alaric and Genferic affected to spare the buildings of the city; that they subsisted in strength and

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C H A P. LXXI. beauty under the auspicious government of Theodoric<sup>23</sup>; and that the momentary resentment of Totila<sup>24</sup> was disarmed by his own temper and the advice of his friends and enemies. From these innocent Barbarians, the reproach may be transferred to the Catholics of Rome. The statues, altars, and houses, of the dæmons were an abomination in their eyes; and in the absolute command of the city, they might labour with zeal and perseverance to erase the idolatry of their ancestors. The demolition of the temples in the East<sup>25</sup> affords to *them* an example of conduct, and to *us* an argument of belief; and it is probable, that a portion of guilt or merit may be imputed with justice to the Roman proselytes. Yet their abhorrence was confined to the monuments of heathen superstition; and the civil structures that were dedicated to the business or pleasure of society might be preserved without injury or scandal. The change of religion was accomplished, not by a popular tumult, but by the decrees of the emperors, of the senate, and of time. Of the Christian hierarchy, the bishops of Rome were commonly the most prudent and least fanatic: nor can any positive charge be opposed to the meritorious act of saving and converting the majestic structure of the Pantheon<sup>26</sup>.

III. The use  
and abuse of  
the materials.

III. The value of any object that supplies the wants or pleasures of mankind, is compounded of its substance and its form, of the materials and the manufacture. Its price must depend on the number of persons by whom it may be acquired

and used; on the extent of the market; and consequently on the ease or difficulty of remote exportation, according to the nature of the commodity, its local situation, and the temporary circumstances of the world. The Barbarian conquerors of Rome usurped in a moment the toil and treasure of successive ages; but, except the luxuries of immediate consumption, they must view without desire all that could not be removed from the city in the Gothic waggons or the fleet of the Vandals<sup>27</sup>. Gold and silver were the first objects of their avarice; as in every country, and in the smallest compass, they represent the most ample command of the industry and possessions of mankind. A vase or a statue of those precious metals might tempt the vanity of some Barbarian chief; but the grosser multitude, regardless of the form, was tenacious only of the substance; and the melted ingots might be readily divided and stamped into the current coin of the empire. The less active or less fortunate robbers were reduced to the baser plunder of brass, lead, iron, and copper: whatever had escaped the Goths and Vandals was pillaged by the Greek tyrants; and the emperor Constantine, in his rapacious visit, stripped the bronze tiles from the roof of the Pantheon<sup>28</sup>. The edifices of Rome might be considered as a vast and various mine; the first labour of extracting the materials was already performed; the metals were purified and cast; the marbles were hewn and polished; and after foreign and

C H A P. domestic rapine had been fatiated, the remains  
 LXXI. of the city, could a purchaser have been found, were still venal. The monuments of antiquity had been left naked of their precious ornaments, but the Romans would demolish with their own hands the arches and walls, if the hope of profit could surpass the cost of the labour and exportation. If Charlemagne had fixed in Italy the seat of the Western empire, his genius would have aspired to restore, rather than to violate, the works of the Cæsars : but policy confined the French monarch to the forests of Germany; his taste could be gratified only by destruction, and the new palace of Aix la Chapelle was decorated with the marbles of Ravenna<sup>22</sup> and Rome<sup>23</sup>. Five hundred years after Charlemagne, a king of Sicily, Robert, the wisest and most liberal sovereign of the age, was supplied with the same materials by the easy navigation of the Tyber and the sea; and Petrarch sighs an indignant complaint, that the ancient capital of the world should adorn from her own bowels the slothful luxury of Naples<sup>24</sup>. But these examples of plunder or purchase were rare in the darker ages; and the Romans, alone and unenvied, might have applied to their private or public use the remaining structures of antiquity, if in their present form and situation they had not been useless in a great measure to the city and its inhabitants. The walls still described the old circumference, but the city had descended from the seven hills into the Campus Martius; and some of the noblest monuments

which had braved the injuries of time were left in a desert, far remote from the habitations of mankind. The palaces of the senators were no longer adapted to the manners or fortunes of their indigent successors: the use of baths<sup>22</sup> and porticoes was forgotten: in the sixth century, the games of the theatre, amphitheatre, and circus, had been interrupted: some temples were devoted to the prevailing worship; but the Christian churches preferred the holy figure of the cross; and fashion, or reason, had distributed after a peculiar model the cells and offices of the cloyster. Under the ecclesiastical reign, the number of these pious foundations was enormously multiplied; and the city was crowded with forty monasteries of men, twenty of women, and sixty chapters and colleges of canons and priests<sup>23</sup>, who aggravated, instead of relieving, the depopulation of the tenth century. But if the forms of ancient architecture were disregarded by a people insensible of their use and beauty, the plentiful materials were applied to every call of necessity or superstition; till the fairest columns of the Ionic and Corinthian orders, the richest marbles of Paros and Numidia, were degraded, perhaps to the support of a convent or a stable. The daily havock which is perpetrated by the Turks in the cities of Greece and Asia, may afford a melancholy example; and in the gradual destruction of the monuments of Rome, Sixtus the fifth may alone be excused for employing the stones of the Septizonium in the glorious edifice of St. Peter's<sup>24</sup>.

C H A P. LXXI. A fragment, a ruin, howsoever mangled or profaned, may be viewed with pleasure and regret; but the greater part of the marble was deprived of substance, as well as of place and proportion; it was burnt to lime for the purpose of cement. Since the arrival of Poggius, the temple of Concord<sup>35</sup>, and many capital structures, had vanished from his eyes; and an epigram of the same age expresses a just and pious fear, that the continuance of this practice would finally annihilate all the monuments of antiquity<sup>36</sup>. The smallness of their numbers was the sole check on the demands and depredations of the Romans. The imagination of Petrarch might create the presence of a mighty people<sup>37</sup>; and I hesitate to believe, that, even in the fourteenth century, they could be reduced to a contemptible list of thirty-three thousand inhabitants. From that period to the reign of Leo the tenth, if they multiplied to the amount of eighty-five thousand<sup>38</sup>, the increase of citizens was in some degree pernicious to the ancient city.

IV. The domestic quarrels of the Romans.

IV. I have reserved for the last, the most potent and forcible cause of destruction, the domestic hostilities of the Romans themselves. Under the dominion of the Greek and French emperors, the peace of the city was disturbed by accidental, though frequent, seditions: it is from the decline of the latter, from the beginning of the tenth century, that we may date the licentiousness of private war, which violated with impunity the laws of the Code and the Gospel; without

without respecting the majesty of the absent sovereign, or the presence and person of the vicar of Christ. In a dark period of five hundred years, Rome was perpetually afflicted by the sanguinary quarrels of the nobles and the people, the Guelphs and Ghibelines, the Colonna and Ursini; and if much has escaped the knowledge, and much is unworthy of the notice, of history, I have exposed in the two preceding chapters, the causes and effects of the public disorders. At such a time, when every quarrel was decided by the sword; and none could trust their lives or properties to the impotence of law; the powerful citizens were armed for safety or offence, against the domestic enemies, whom they feared or hated. Except Venice alone, the same dangers and designs were common to all the free republics of Italy; and the nobles usurped the prerogative of fortifying their houses, and erecting strong towers " that were capable of resisting a sudden attack. The cities were filled with these hostile edifices; and the example of Lucca, which contained three hundred towers; her law, which confined their height to the measure of fourscore feet, may be extended with suitable latitude to the more opulent and populous states. The first step of the senator Brancalione in the establishment of peace and justice, was to demolish (as we have already seen) one hundred and forty of the towers of Rome; and, in the last days of anarchy and discord, as late as the reign of Martin the fifth, forty-four still stood in one

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C H A P. of the thirteen or fourteen regions of the city.  
 LXXI. To this mischievous purpose, the remains of antiquity were most readily adapted: the temples and arches afforded a broad and solid basis for the new structures of brick and stone; and we can name the modern turrets that were raised on the triumphal monuments of Julius Cæsar, Titus, and the Antonines \*. With some slight alterations, a theatre, an amphitheatre, a mausoleum, was transformed into a strong and spacious citadel. I need not repeat, that the mole of Adrian has assumed the title and form of the castle of St. Angelo \*; the Septizonium of Severus was capable of standing against a royal army \*; the sepulchre of Metella has sunk under its outworks \*; the theatres of Pompey and Marcellus were occupied by the Savelli and Ursini families \*; and the rough fortress has been gradually softened to the splendour and elegance of an Italian palace. Even the churches were encompassed with arms and bulwarks, and the military engines on the roof of St. Peter's were the terror of the Vatican and the scandal of the Christian world. Whatever is fortified will be attacked; and whatever is attacked may be destroyed. Could the Romans have wrested from the popes the castle of St. Angelo, they had resolved by a public decree to annihilate that monument of servitude. Every building of defence was exposed to a siege; and in every siege the arts and engines of destruction were laboriously employed. After the death of Nicholas the fourth, Rome,

without a sovereign or a senate, was abandoned six months to the fury of civil war. "The houses," says a cardinal and poet of the times, "were crushed by the weight and velocity of enormous stones"; the walls were perforated by the strokes of the battering-ram; the towers were involved in fire and smoke; and the assailants were stimulated by rapine and revenge." The work was consummated by the tyranny of the laws; and the factions of Italy alternately exercised a blind and thoughtless vengeance on their adversaries, whose houses and castles they razed to the ground". In comparing the *days* of foreign, with the *ages* of domestic, hostility, we must pronounce, that the latter have been far more ruinous to the city, and our opinion is confirmed by the evidence of Petrarch. "Behold," says the laureat, "the relics of Rome, the image of her pristine greatness! neither time nor the Barbarian can boast the merit of this stupendous destruction; it was perpetrated by her own citizens, by the most illustrious of her sons; and your ancestors (he writes to a noble Annibaldi) have done with the battering-ram, what the Punic hero could not accomplish with the sword". The influence of the two last principles of decay must in some degree be multiplied by each other; since the houses and towers, which were subverted by civil war, required a new and perpetual supply from the monuments of antiquity.

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The Coliseum or amphitheatre of Titus.

These general observations may be separately applied to the amphitheatre of Titus, which has obtained the name of the COLISEUM", either from its magnitude or from Nero's colossal statue: an edifice, had it been left to time and nature, which might perhaps have claimed an eternal duration. The curious antiquaries, who have computed the numbers and seats, are disposed to believe, that above the upper row of stone steps, the amphitheatre was encircled and elevated with several stages of wooden galleries, which were repeatedly consumed by fire, and restored by the emperors. Whatever was precious, or portable, or profane, the statues of gods and heroes, and the costly ornaments of sculpture, which were cast in brass, or overspread with leaves of silver and gold, became the first prey of conquest or fanaticism, of the avarice of the Barbarians or the Christians. In the massy stones of the Coliseum, many holes are discerned; and the two most probable conjectures represent the various accidents of its decay. These stones were connected by solid links of brass or iron, nor had the eye of rapine overlooked the value of the baser metals": the vacant space was converted into a fair or market; the artisans of the Coliseum are mentioned in an ancient survey; and the chasms were perforated or enlarged to receive the poles that supported the shops or tents of the mechanic trades". Reduced to its naked majesty, the Flavian amphitheatre was contemplated with awe and admiration by the pilgrims of the North;

and their rude enthusiasm broke forth in a sublime C H A P.  
 proverbial expression; which is recorded in the LXXI.  
 eighth century, in the fragments of the venerable  
 Bede: "As long as the Coliseum stands, Rome  
 "shall stand; when the Coliseum falls, Rome  
 "will fall; when Rome falls, the world will  
 "fall". In the modern system of war, a situa-  
 tion commanded by three hills would not be  
 chosen for a fortress; but the strength of the  
 walls and arches could resist the engines of as-  
 sault; a numerous garrison might be lodged in  
 the enclosure; and while one faction occupied  
 the Vatican and the Capitol, the other was in-  
 trenced in the Lateran and the Coliseum".

The abolition at Rome of the ancient games Games of  
 must be understood with some latitude; and the Rome.  
 carnival sports, of the Testacean mount and the  
 Circus Agonalis", were regulated by the law"  
 or custom of the city. The senator presided with  
 dignity and pomp to adjudge and distribute the  
 prizes, the gold ring, or the *pallium*", as it was  
 styled, of cloth or silk. A tribute on the Jews  
 supplied the annual expence"; and the races,  
 on foot, on horseback, or in chariots, were en-  
 nobled by a tilt and tournament of seventy-two  
 of the Roman youth. In the year one thousand  
 three hundred and thirty-two, a bull-feast, after A bull-feast  
 the fashion of the Moors and Spaniards, was ce- in the Col-  
 lebrated in the Coliseum itself; and the livingiseum,  
 manners are painted in a diary of the times". A. D. 1332;  
 A convenient order of benches was restored; and September 3.  
 a general proclamation, as far as Rimini and

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CHAP. Ravenna, invited the nobles to exercise their  
 LXXI. skill and courage in this perilous adventure. The  
 Roman ladies were marshalled in three squadrons,  
 and seated in three balconies, which on this day,  
 the third of September, were lined with scarlet  
 cloth. The fair Jacova di Rovere led the matrons  
 from beyond the Tyber, a pure and native race,  
 who still represent the features and character of  
 antiquity. The remainder of the city was divided  
 as usual between the Colonna and Urfini: the  
 two factions were proud of the number and beauty  
 of their female bands: the charms of Savella Urfini  
 are mentioned with praise; and the Colonna  
 regretted the absence of the youngest of their  
 house, who had sprained her ankle in the garden  
 of Nero's tower. The lots of the champions  
 were drawn by an old and respectable citizen;  
 and they descended into the *arena*, or pit, to  
 encounter the wild-bulls, on foot as it should  
 seem, with a single spear. Amidst the crowd,  
 our annalist has selected the names, colours, and  
 devices, of twenty of the most conspicuous  
 knights. Several of the names are the most illustrious  
 of Rome and the ecclesiastical state; Malatesta,  
 Polenta, della Valle, Cafarello, Savelli,  
 Capoccio, Conti, Annibaldi, Altieri, Corsi; the  
 colours were adapted to their taste and situation;  
 the devices are expressive of hope or despair, and  
 breathe the spirit of gallantry and arms. "I am  
 alone, like the youngest of the Horatii," the  
 confidence of an intrepid stranger: "I live dis-  
 solate," a weeping widower: "I burn

“ under the ashes,” a discreet lover : “ I adore C H A P.  
 “ Lavinia, or Lucretia,” the ambiguous declara- LXXI.  
 tion of a modern passion : “ My faith is as pure,”  
 the motto of a white livery : “ Who is stronger  
 “ than myself ? ” of a lion’s hide : “ If I am  
 “ drowned in blood, what a pleasant death,”  
 the wish of ferocious courage. The pride or  
 prudence of the Ursini restrained them from the  
 field, which was occupied by three of their he-  
 reditary rivals, whose inscriptions denoted the  
 lofty greatness of the Colonna name : “ Though  
 “ sad, I am strong : ” “ Strong as I am great : ”  
 “ If I fall,” addressing himself to the spectators,  
 “ you fall with me : ” — intimating (says the  
 contemporary writer) that while the other fami-  
 lies were the subjects of the Vatican, they alone  
 were the supporters of the Capitol. The combats  
 of the amphitheatre were dangerous and bloody.  
 Every champion successively encountered a wild  
 bull ; and the victory may be ascribed to the  
 quadrupedes, since no more than eleven were  
 left on the field, with the loss of nine wounded  
 and eighteen killed on the side of their adver-  
 saries. Some of the noblest families might mourn,  
 but the pomp of the funerals, in the churches of  
 St. John Lateran and St. Maria Maggiore, afford-  
 ed a second holiday to the people. Doubtless it  
 was not in such conflicts that the blood of the  
 Romans should have been shed ; yet in blaming  
 their rashness, we are compelled to applaud their  
 gallantry ; and the noble volunteers, who display  
 their magnificence, and risk their lives, under

C H A P. the balconies of the fair, excite a more generous  
LXXI. sympathy than the thousands of captives and  
malefactors who were reluctantly dragged to the  
scene of slaughter ”.

Injuries,

This use of the amphitheatre was a rare, perhaps a singular, festival: the demand for the materials was a daily and continual want, which the citizens could gratify without restraint or remorse. In the fourteenth century, a scandalous act of concord secured to both factions the privilege of extracting stones from the free and common quarry of the Coliseum ”; and Poggius laments that the greater part of these stones had been burnt to lime by the folly of the Romans “. To check this abuse, and to prevent the nocturnal crimes that might be perpetrated in the vast and gloomy recess, Eugenius the fourth surrounded it with a wall; and, by a charter long extant, granted both the ground and edifice to the monks of an adjacent convent “. After his death, the wall was overthrown in a tumult of the people; and had they themselves respected the noblest monument of their fathers, they might have justified the resolve that it should never be degraded to private property. The inside was damaged; but in the middle of the sixteenth century, an æra of taste and learning, the exterior circumference of one thousand six hundred and twelve feet was still entire and inviolate; a triple elevation of fourscore arches, which rose to the height of one hundred and eight feet. Of the present ruin, the nephews of Paul the third are the guilty agents; and every traveller who

views the Farnese palace may curse the sacrilege and luxury of these upstart princes". A similar reproach is applied to the Barberini; and the repetition of injury might be dreaded from every reign, till the Coliseum was placed under the safeguard of religion, by the most liberal of the pontiffs, Benedict the fourteenth, who consecrated a spot which persecution and fable had stained with the blood of so many Christian martyrs".

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and consecration of the Coliseum.

When Petrarch first gratified his eyes with a view of those monuments, whose scattered fragments so far surpass the most eloquent descriptions, he was astonished at the supine indifference of the Romans themselves"; he was humbled rather than elated by the discovery, that, except his friend Rienzi and one of the Colonna, a stranger of the Rhone was more conversant with these antiquities than the nobles and natives of the metropolis". The ignorance and credulity of the Romans are elaborately displayed in the old survey of the city which was composed about the beginning of the thirteenth century; and, without dwelling on the manifold errors of name and place, the legend of the Capitol" may provoke a smile of contempt and indignation. "The Capitol," says the anonymous writer, "is so named as being the head of the world; where the consuls and senators formerly resided for the government of the city and the globe. The strong and lofty walls were covered with glass and gold, and crowned with a roof of the richest and most curious carving.

Ignorance and barbarism of the Romans.



C H A P. " Below the citadel stood a palace, of gold for  
 LXXI. " the greatest part, decorated with precious  
 " stones, and whose value might be esteemed at  
 " one third of the world itself. The statues of  
 " all the provinces were arranged in order, each  
 " with a small bell suspended from its neck;  
 " and such was the contrivance of art magic ",  
 " that if the province rebelled against Rome, the  
 " statue turned round to that quarter of the hea-  
 " vens, the bell rang, the prophet of the Capi-  
 " tol reported the prodigy, and the senate was  
 " admonished of the impending danger." A  
 second example of less importance, though of  
 equal absurdity, may be drawn from the two  
 marble horses, led by two naked youths, which  
 have since been transported from the baths of Con-  
 stantine to the Quirinal hill. The groundless appli-  
 cation of the names of Phidias and Praxiteles may  
 perhaps be excused; but these Grecian sculptors  
 should not have been removed above four hun-  
 dred years from the age of Pericles to that of Ti-  
 berius: they should not have been transformed  
 into two philosophers or magicians, whose naked-  
 ness was the symbol of truth and knowledge,  
 who revealed to the emperor his most secret acti-  
 ons; and, after refusing all pecuniary recompence,  
 solicited the honour of leaving this eternal mo-  
 nument of themselves". Thus awake to the  
 power of magic, the Romans were insensible to  
 the beauties of art; no more than five statues  
 were visible to the eyes of Poggius; and of the  
 multitudes which chance or design had buried  
 under the ruins, the resurrection was fortunately

delayed till a safer and more enlightened age<sup>71</sup>. C H A P.  
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 The Nile, which now adorns the Vatican, had been explored by some labourers in digging a vineyard near the temple, or convent, of the Minerva; but the impatient proprietor, who was tormented by some visits of curiosity, restored the unprofitable marble to its former grave<sup>72</sup>. The discovery of a statue of Pompey, ten feet in length, was the occasion of a law-suit. It had been found under a partition-wall: the equitable judge had pronounced, that the head should be separated from the body to satisfy the claims of the contiguous owners; and the sentence would have been executed, if the intercession of a cardinal, and the liberality of a pope, had not rescued the Roman hero from the hands of his barbarous countrymen<sup>73</sup>.

But the clouds of barbarism were gradually dispelled; and the peaceful authority of Martin the fifth and his successors, restored the ornaments of the city as well as the order of the ecclesiastical state. The improvements of Rome, since the fifteenth century, have not been the spontaneous produce of freedom and industry. The first and most natural root of a great city, is the labour and populousness of the adjacent country, which supplies the materials of subsistence, of manufactures, and of foreign trade. But the greater part of the Campagna of Rome is reduced to a dreary and desolate wilderness: the overgrown estates of the princes and the clergy are cultivated by the lazy hands of indigent and hopeless vassals; and the scanty

Restoration  
and orna-  
ments of the  
city,  
A. D. 1420.  
etc.

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harvests are confined or exported for the benefit of a monopoly. A second and more artificial cause of the growth of a metropolis, is the residence of a monarch, the expence of a luxurious court, and the tributes of dependent provinces. Those provinces and tributes had been lost in the fall of the empire: and if some streams of the silver of Peru and the gold of Brasil have been attracted by the Vatican; the revenues of the cardinals, the fees of office, the oblations of pilgrims and clients, and the remnant of ecclesiastical taxes, afford a poor and precarious supply, which maintains however the idleness of the court and city. The population of Rome, far below the measure of the great capitals of Europe, does not exceed one hundred and seventy thousand inhabitants"; and within the spacious inclosure of the walls, the largest portion of the seven hills is overspread with vineyards and ruins. The beauty and splendour of the modern city may be ascribed to the abuses of the government, to the influence of superstition. Each reign (the exceptions are rare) has been marked by the rapid elevation of a new family, enriched by the childless pontiff at the expence of the church and country. The palaces of these fortunate nephews are the most costly monuments of elegance and servitude; the perfect arts of architecture, painting, and sculpture, have been prostituted in their service, and their galleries and gardens are decorated with the most precious works of antiquity, which taste or vanity has prompted them to collect. The ecclesiastical revenues were more

decently employed by the popes themselves in the pomp of the Catholic worship; but it is superfluous to enumerate their pious foundations of altars, chapels, and churches, since these lesser stars are eclipsed by the sun of the Vatican, by the dome of St. Peter, the most glorious structure that ever has been applied to the use of religion. The fame of Julius the second, Leo the tenth, and Sixtus the fifth, is accompanied by the superior merit of Bramante and Fontana, of Raphael and Michael-Angelo: and the same munificence which had been displayed in palaces and temples, was directed with equal zeal to revive and emulate the labours of antiquity. Prostrate obelisks were raised from the ground, and erected in the most conspicuous places; of the eleven aqueducts of the Cæsars and consuls, three were restored; the artificial rivers were conducted over a long series of old, or of new, arches, to discharge into marble basins a flood of salubrious and refreshing waters: and the spectator, impatient to ascend the steps of St. Peter's, is detained by a column of Egyptian granite, which rises between two lofty and perpetual fountains, to the height of one hundred and twenty feet. The map, the description, the monuments of ancient Rome, have been elucidated by the diligence of the antiquarian and the student<sup>75</sup>: and the footsteps of heroes, the relics, not of superstition, but of empire, are devoutly visited by a new race of pilgrims from the remote, and once savage, countries of the North.

C H A P.

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C H A P.

LXXI.

Final conclusion.

Of these pilgrims, and of every reader, the attention will be excited by an history of the decline and fall of the Roman empire; the greatest, perhaps, and most awful scene, in the history of mankind. The various causes and progressive effects are connected with many of the events most interesting in human annals: the artful policy of the Cæsars, who long maintained the name and image of a free republic; the disorders of military despotism; the rise, establishment, and sects of Christianity; the foundation of Constantinople; the division of the monarchy; the invasion and settlements of the Barbarians of Germany and Scythia; the institutions of the civil law; the character and religion of Mahomet; the temporal sovereignty of the popes; the restoration and decay of the Western empire of Charlemagne; the crusades of the Latins in the East; the conquests of the Saracens and Turks; the ruin of the Greek empire; the state and revolutions of Rome in the middle age. The historian may applaud the importance and variety of his subject; but, while he is conscious of his own imperfections, he must often accuse the deficiency of his materials. It was among the ruins of the Capitol that I first conceived the idea of a work which has amused and exercised near twenty years of my life, and which, however inadequate to my own wishes, I finally deliver to the curiosity and candour of the public.

LAUSANNE,  
June 27, 1787.

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